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THE HISTORY

OF

BRITISH JOURNALISM.

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THE HISTORY

OF

BRITISH JOURNALISM,

FROM THE

FOUNDATION OF THE NEWSPAPER PRESS IN ENGLAND

TO THE REPEAL OF THE STAMP ACT IN 1855,

WITH

SKETCHES OF PRESS CELEBRITIES.

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BY

ALEXANDER ANDREWS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE HISTORY

OF

BRITISH JOURNALISM.

CHAPTER I.

CUCHEVAL CLARIGNY'S "HISTOIRE DE LA PRESSE"—DANIEL STUART AND HIS BRILLIANT STAFF—COLERIDGE, LAMB, SOUTHEY, WORDSWORTH, AND MACKINTOSH—THE "MORNING POST" AND "COURIER," AND WHAT THEY SOLD FOR—BURNS SPURNS STUART'S OFFERS—COLERIDGE'S CHARGES AND STUART'S DEFENCE—FOX'S OPINION OF COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS—DE QUINCEY ON THE SAME—THE "MORNING POST" LOOKING UP—MACKINTOSH WORKING FOR THE "ORACLE" AND JOHN BULL—THE "BRITISH PRESS" ESTABLISHED—GEORGE LANE—STUART SELLS THE "MORNING POST"—THE "MORNING HERALD" AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE—THE "ALBION" AND WHAT BEFEL IT—ITS EDITORS, M'LEOD AND FENWICK—CHARLES LAMB BECOMES A REBEL AND A TRAITOR—SIR FRANCIS BURDETT TRIES A MUZZLE ON THE PRESS—COBBETT'S "POLITICAL REGISTER"—NAPOLEON DECLARES WAR AGAINST THE ENGLISH PRESS—THE GOVERNMENT SIDES WITH IT—BUT BETRAYS IT—TRIAL OF PELTIER FOR A LIBEL ON NAPOLEON—NO ROOM FOR THE REPORTERS—PELTIER SUBSIDISED SECRETLY AND PROSECUTED OPENLY.

THE more recent events of British journalism, which we are now approaching, have been dwelt upon more frequently and more fully than the former portion of the subject, and another writer has added a few contributions to the history of the press for the last fifty years. This is a Frenchman, M. Cucheval Clarigny, formerly editor in chief of the *Constitutionnel* of Paris, who, content with adopting Mr. Knight Hunt's newspaper records of two

centuries, has apparently made some research into the more recent annals of the press.* But he is soon tempted into the playground of his truant predecessors, who have revelled in wonderful stories of the vast circulation, the gigantic establishment, the world-wide information, the despotic influence, and the princely income of one paper, or the internal economy and getting up of another; in fact, jumped from the past into the middle of the present. As Mr. Hunt embarrassed himself with a kindred but too extensive subject, the liberty of printing, so M. Clarigny, not content with extending the range of inquiry so as to take in the United States, with their legion of journals, gives us a couple of chapters of the history of our existing monthly periodicals and reviews, apparently unconscious that that branch of literary history was commenced by Dr. Nathan Drake.† Thus is the history of the newspaper press again coffined up within unnecessarily narrow limits to admit kindred subjects which, after all, each claim a volume to themselves; but, in what is original of his remarks upon newspapers, M. Clarigny displays a wonderful capacity (unusual in a foreigner) of understanding by what means the newspaper attained its greatness in England, and what has been at various periods of its later career its position in relation to the other estates of the realm. Now and then he treads boldly out of the footsteps which Knight Hunt took straight across the region of history; but the march of both writers was too rapid to thoroughly investigate the objects by the way, and they hurried on to the present leviathan sight which the press exhibits, caring too little for those which lay by the wayside of the past.

The new century found hands humbly and obscurely at work on the newspapers that have since, with the aid of

* "Histoire de la Presse en Angleterre et aux Etats Unis," par Cucheval Clarigny. Paris, 1857.

† Essays on Periodical Publications.

their pens only, cut their names deep into the rock of time. Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, Wordsworth were all, for the paltry stipends of Mr. Daniel Stuart, raising to eminence his paper, the *Morning Post;* the more favoured Mackintosh, the brother-in-law * of Stuart, being also a regular contributor. Coleridge wrote poetry, and occasionally political articles, but could never report, and had great difficulty in writing upon a prescribed subject with the facility and speed required in newspaper composition; Lamb contributed squibs and paragraphs; whilst Southey is described in general terms as the hardest worker of the lot.

The *Morning Post,* with a circulation reduced to 350 daily, had fallen into the hands of Stuart and Christie the auctioneer, who bought it of Tattersall in 1796, giving only 600*l.* for copyright, house, and plant; and in 1799, in conjunction with Street, Stuart also purchased the *Courier,* which had been formerly a flourishing evening paper, but had dropped from a circulation of six thousand to one of two thousand. This was partly owing to the mismanagement of the proprietors, and more particularly to the late appointment of the notorious John Thelwall to the post of editor—an appointment which threatened to bring the paper into such serious collision with the Government, that the proprietors were glad to rescind it in a fortnight. On these two papers, Stuart set his brilliant apprentices to work, and the following is his estimate of their respective services:—

"Southey never wrote a line of prose for the *Morning Post,* nor, I think, of prose or verse for the *Courier.* He contributed pieces of poetry on a small salary. Wordsworth contributed some political sonnets without pecuniary reward, but he never wrote a line of prose for the *Morning Post.* To the *Courier* he years afterwards sent some extracts from his then unpublished pamphlet on the Cintra Conven-

* Mr. Knight Hunt says *son*-in-law.

tion, still without recompense of any kind. Wordsworth was at that time little known to the public. But as for good Charles Lamb, I never could make anything of his writings. Coleridge often and repeatedly pressed me to settle him on a salary, and often and repeatedly did I try, but it would not do. Of politics he knew nothing—they were out of his line of reading and thought—and his drollery was vapid when given in short paragraphs fit for a newspaper."*

Coleridge's connexion with the newspaper press most likely commenced with the *Morning Chronicle*, for we have an anecdote on the authority of Stuart himself to the effect that when the poet was in London penniless, and about the time of that despairing enlistment into the Light Horse, he sent a poem of a few lines to Perry, soliciting the loan of a guinea for a distressed author. The request was complied with, with that open-handed alacrity which was characteristic of Perry, and Coleridge could never afterwards hear the *Morning Chronicle* mentioned without emotion. This does not strengthen Stuart's charge of habitual ingratitude against him. He himself says in his Biographia Literaria, "I retired to a cottage at Stowey, and provided for my scanty maintenance by writing verses for a London morning newspaper." This was in 1796; but the London morning newspaper was not the *Morning Post*, for we are told that his connexion with that paper did not commence till Christmas, 1797, when he wrote political pieces for it; but he did not actually obtain a station upon its staff till 1800, when he says, "Soon after my return from Germany" (which was on the 27th of November, 1799), "I was solicited to undertake the literary and political departments of the *Morning Post*."†

He, perhaps without sufficient grounds, boasts that he

* Daniel Stuart's Letter in the "Gentleman's Magazine," June, 1838, p. 577.

† Biographia Literaria, vol. i. p. 217.

raised the circulation by 2,000 per annum, whilst he derived so little pecuniary advantage from it that his weekly remuneration was only equal to his weekly necessities. This complaint Stuart has laboured to contradict, in the vindication of his conduct which he published in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of May, June, and August, 1838, in reply to the charge of Mr. Gillman, Coleridge's biographer—a vindication which was much damaged, and charges which were much strengthened, by the rejoinder of the poet's nephew, Mr. Henry Coleridge, in the same publication of July, 1838 (pp. 22, 23).

From all this controversy, it appears that, some years before, Robert Burns had rejected, with disdain, the offer made him by Stuart's brother, Peter, the proprietor of the *Star*, to write for him at a salary of a guinea a-week—a disdain which Daniel Stuart considered insolent: "We hear much of purse-proud insolence, but poets can sometimes be insolent on the conscious power of talents, as well as vulgar upstarts (can be) on the conscious power of purse." . . . "It would surely have been a more honourable employment than that of an excise gauger." With these very moderate notions of liberality, Stuart crossed the path of Coleridge. The poet was poor, unskilled in the ways of the world, and no doubt a little improvident, if not also indolent; and sheer necessity forced him to go into the harness of the *Morning Post*, and be starved into writing brilliantly. That a man like Coleridge was of no more value to a morning paper than Mr. Stuart represents him, is scarcely credible. We know that his articles, anti-Jacobin and anti-Gallican, had so much weight that Bonaparte winced under them, and would have given anything to have got the writer into his hands, with that view sending a frigate on one occasion in pursuit of the ship in which he sailed from Naples for England; and that Fox actually declared in the House of Commons that Coleridge's essays in the *Morning Post* had led to the

rupture of the truce of Amiens. Mildly opposed to Pitt, they yet discountenanced the intrigues of opposition, and once or twice the *Morning Chronicle* was so deceived by them that it charged them upon the Treasury.

De Quincey, writing of the daily press, attaches a slightly higher value to Coleridge's writings than the unappreciative Stuart: "Worlds of fine thinking lie buried in that vast abyss, never to be disentombed or restored to human admiration. Like the sea, it has swallowed treasures without end, that no diving-bell will bring up again; but nowhere, throughout its shoreless magazines of wealth, does there lie such a bed of pearls, confounded with the rubbish and *purgamenta* of ages, as in the political papers of Coleridge. No more admirable monument could be raised to the memory of Coleridge than a republication of his essays in the *Morning Post*, but still more of those afterwards published in the *Courier*." The latter *were* "disentombed and restored to human admiration," under the title of "Essays on His Own Times." Coleridge also contributed to Stuart's papers the odes, "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter," "France," "Dejection," "On the Departing Year," "Love," and twenty or thirty other pieces, now included in his works.

The *Morning Post*, which, seven years before, only sold three hundred and fifty copies daily, now stood second in the ranks of the morning press; the order being, (1st) *Morning Chronicle;* (2d) *Morning Post;* (3d) *Morning Herald;* (4th) *Morning Advertiser;* (5th) *Times*. Had Coleridge's writings *nothing* to do with this?

Yet this was the man whom Stuart confesses to have dragged to the gallery of the House of Commons with a view to making him still more profitable as a reporter—a post which he appears somewhat surprised, if not angry, to find the poet and philosopher was unfitted to fulfil; and he also lets out that he had him in some such bondage as Sir Richard Philips said, jocularly, he would like to have had

him, "in a garret, without a coat to his back;"—"I agreed to allow him my largest salary; I took a first floor for him in King Street, Covent Garden, at my tailor's, Howell's, whose wife was a cheerful, good housewife, of middle age, who I knew would nurse Coleridge as kindly as if he were her son; and he owned he was comfortably taken care of."

Southey's salary, Stuart admits, was small, although his contributions were liberal: and whilst genius was fostered with a guinea a week by Mr. Stuart, Coleridge's subsequently fellow-labourer, and, to some extent, rival, Mackintosh, was earning ten times the amount from another paper. In the winter of 1799, on his return from a tour on the Continent with his wife, he wrote articles on French and Belgian politics for the *Oracle*, then owned by John Bell, with whom he proposed an engagement to superintend the foreign news. One week, we are told, being paid in proportion to the quantity, his due was ten guineas, at which John Bell, a liberal man, was rather confounded, exclaiming "No paper can stand that:" and substituted a fixed salary, as a cheaper plan.* Mackintosh also wrote for the *Morning Chronicle* before his connexion with Stuart, and the letters which appeared in that paper signed "The Ghost of Vandegrab," and a character of Mirabeau, are pointed out as his by his biographer.

Charles Lamb was introduced to Stuart by Coleridge as a writer of light articles, by which he might add something to an income then barely sufficient for the decent support of himself and sister. His contributions were principally facetious paragraphs, then much in vogue in the daily papers, which paid at the rate of sixpence apiece for them: which he also wrote at the same time for the *Morning Chronicle*. Lamb's opinion of his taskmaster of the *Post* was genial:—"He ever appeared to us one of the finest tempered of editors—frank, plain, and English all

* Mackintosh's "Life of the Right Hon. Sir James Mackintosh."

over." The connexion of such men with the *Morning Post*, ill-requited as it was in each case, must have had a great deal to do with the increased circulation which the paper was attaining. When Mr. Tattersall sold it to Stuart, its advertising connexion was almost confined to horse and carriage auctioneers and dealers; but now the booksellers, perceiving the literary turn it was taking, almost clamoured for room for their advertisements. But Stuart, elevated by the success which he owed in a great measure to his ill-paid workmen, returned an arrogant answer, and, in disgust, they set up a paper for themselves, the *British Press*, just as, in after-years, they started the *Globe* against his *Courier*. A young man, named George Lane, had been a drudge of Stuart's upon the *Post*, and being pressed by the proprietors of the new paper, and hearing that Stuart was about selling the old one, he went over as editor to the *British Press*, an act which Stuart mentions incidentally with so much displeasure in his letters about his contributors, which we have already quoted, that Mr. Lane thought it necessary to clear himself, which he did in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of September, 1838 (pp. 275-6), by pointing out several inaccuracies in Stuart's statement. Stuart disposed of the *Morning Post* in August, 1803, just a year after Coleridge ceased to write for it; and, in 1819, his connexion with the newspaper press ceased with his retirement from the *Courier*.

Dispassionately looking back over the circumstances of this brilliant staff and the way it was paid, and carefully going over Stuart's defence, penned more than thirty years afterwards, we cannot alter our opinion that he got a band of clever young contributors for next to nothing. Circumstances brought together a party of talented and enthusiastic young men—Mackintosh and Southey, with the hot republican feelings of youth (modified or abjured in maturer opinions and riper years), and Coleridge and Southey again with a wild, visionary, Utopian project of

socialist colonisation in their heads: that pantisocracy that tumbled to pieces like a child's card-house, when the breath of doubt fell on it—and to all time their names shall descend to fame, inseparable in association, Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, Wordsworth: but the first band that bound them in that indissoluble union was a column of the *Morning Post*. That the work they did so industriously for Stuart (for, although he affirms that Coleridge did not give the full value of his stipend, we have the poet writing to his friend Wordsworth in December, 1799, "As for me, I dedicate my nights and days to Stuart"*)—that their drudgery did not materially improve their circumstances or influence their position, we may infer from no mention being made of it by their biographers, in the cases of Mr. Southey's "Life of his Father," E. M[oxon]'s "Memoir of Lamb," Cottle's "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey," or Dr. Wordsworth's "Life of Wordsworth"—that Serjeant Talfourd makes but passing mention of it in explanation of Charles Lamb's letters, and that Mr. Mackintosh, whilst referring to his illustrious father's connexion with the *Oracle* and *Morning Chronicle*, makes no allusion to Stuart's paper. No attention would have been directed to the subject at all but for Coleridge's pointed and unmistakeable complaints; as for Lamb, he speaks tenderly of Stuart, as he spoke of everybody; but what was Stuart's estimate of *him?* In his eyes he was the fool of the lot, for he had not the discrimination to see that he possessed in Lamb a mine of power for another department; had Perry stood in Stuart's place, we have little hesitation in affirming that the essays of "Elia" would have graced the *Morning Post*, instead of waiting for the "London Magazine." Mr. Edmonds, in his notes to the "Poetry of the *Antijacobin*," brings a serious charge against the honesty of the *Courier* under Stuart, asserting that it reprinted from year to year, without acknowledg-

* Dr. Wordsworth's "Life of Wordsworth," vol. i. p. 160.

ment, the learned leading articles of the *Liverpool Courier*, a paper established by the Rev. Richard Watson, late Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in conjunction with his friend Kaye, about 1807.*

The old question of the liberty of reporting parliamentary debates was now again brought up, and it was again declared by a Lord Chancellor to be a breach of privilege. On the 21st of March, 1801, Lord Walsingham rose in the House of Lords to complain that some speeches and conversation of the Duke of Athol and two of the bishops had been reported, animadverted upon, and misrepresented in the *Morning Herald.* There was no objection to the motion which followed, that the printer and publisher be taken into custody of the Usher of the Black Rod; yet the Lord Chancellor, Lord Loughborough, could not forego the opportunity which it seemed to afford him, of laying down the law of the House:—"The Lord Chancellor left the woolsack, and observed that *to print and publish reports of the debates, or any conversation that passed in that House, was a known breach of the privileges of that House;* but the offence was much aggravated when any person took upon him to misstate what passed, and express it in language of his own, widely differing from that which was spoken; *nor was it a less breach of privilege to make what had been said by two right reverend prelates in debate, the subject of discussion or animadversion in a public newspaper.*" † Not a murmur was heard in protest against this antiquated stuff, —not a smile came over one noble face in that august and intellectual assembly; but on the 23d the farce was played out, and Hugh Brown and T. Glassington, the printer and publisher, appearing at the bar, according to order, were reprimanded, and discharged on payment of the fees.

On the 17th of April, the House of Lords committed Allan M'Leod, the editor, and John Higginbottom, the

* Poetry of the *Antijacobin*, p. 245, note.

† Parliamentary Register, vol. xiv. p. 534.

printer of the *Albion* daily newspaper, to prison, for breach of privilege; but deigned to order the discharge of Higginbottom on his petition on June 2d, with a reprimand, and the never-forgotten payment of the fees. The *Albion* was, however, a paper of evil repute. On June 21st, 1802, M'Leod was again sentenced, for a libel on Lord Clare, to be imprisoned for three years in Newgate, and to give security for his good behaviour for seven years, himself in one thousand pounds, and two sureties in two hundred pounds each. To his unenviable seat in the editorial chair, John Fenwick succeeded, and in John Fenwick's motley staff, who should now enlist but Charles Lamb, who has left the *Morning Post*. Here, he says himself, his "occupation was to write treason." Elia, who chats to us so agreeably of the Blue-coat School in his early days; the East India House clerk, who, perched at a desk in Leadenhall-street, patiently checked and made up pay-lists; good brother Charles, who lived a snug, harmless, quiet life with his kind, prim sister; Charles Lamb, who enjoyed with so keen a zest those quiet old evenings in the little smoky room of the Salutation and Cat, beaming upon Coleridge through the clouds that ascended from his pipe; worthy Charles Lamb, who cried when he missed the old familiar clock from St. Dunstan's Church—can we believe him when he says he wrote treason? His powder would have been spoiled with tears shed in the priming—he would have fought with his sword in its scabbard. The *Albion* was undoubtedly a violent, seditious paper, which had clung tenaciously to the exploded old republican doctrines of a few years before, and had raved itself down to a very small circulation; Lamb says, only a hundred subscribers. "Blocks, axes, Whitehall tribunals, were covered with flowers of so cunning a periphrasis, as Mr. Bayes says, never naming the thing directly, that the keen eye of an attorney-general was insufficient to detect the lurking snake among them." . . .

"Already one paragraph, and another, as we learned afterwards from a gentleman in the Treasury, had begun to be marked at that office, with a view to its being submitted at least to the attention of the proper law officers." In a subsequent letter to his friend Manning, he mentions "A Dissertation on the State of Political Parties in England at the End of the Eighteenth Century" (we should be disposed to think, from the title, that this was the most ambitious of his political flights), and adds, "It was written originally for the two-and-twenty readers of the *Albion* (this calculation includes printer, four pressmen, and a devil)." The fall of the *Albion* is thus announced to Manning,—"The *Albion* is dead—dead as nail in door, and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of an opening to the *Morning Chronicle ! ! !*"* This was through the influence of George Dyer; but whether it led to anything, we have failed to discover. Almost the last we hear of Lamb's connexion with the newspaper press—never, as has been seen, a very intimate or agreeable one—was in a sketch contributed to the *Examiner* in 1817.

Poor Fenwick, the last editor of the *Albion*, appears to have participated in its ruin; for we read in a letter of Charles Lamb's, dated 26th February, 1808, the following very significant line: "Little Fenwick is in the rules of the Fleet."

It was far more excusable in the House of Lords to put a muzzle upon such a dangerous and rabid paper as the *Albion*, than it was in a popular member of Parliament, who boasted of his attachment to the liberties of the country, and more particularly of the press, to take advantage of this paltry privilege, and claim immunity from the remarks of public newspapers, by virtue of this arbitrary prerogative of Parliament. Yet Sir Francis Burdett, than whom none could be found louder in his

* Talfourd's "Letters and Life of Charles Lamb," vol. i. p. 146.

protestation of a devotion to freedom of all kinds, claimed the protection of Parliament against one of the most legitimate and least offensive of newspaper attacks, an advertisement, merely, emanating from the friends of his late antagonist, Mr. Mainwaring, and being the resolutions passed at a meeting held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, for the purpose of promoting a petition against the return of Burdett. On the 18th of December, 1802, Sir Francis Burdett stood up in his place in the House of Commons, and called attention to the breach of the privileges of the House committed by the *True Briton*, in the publication of this advertisement. But although the discussion was continued till the 20th, the House came to no resolution on the subject, but met it coldly, and Sir Francis Burdett thought it advisable to let the matter drop.

But a greater than Burdett, a greater power than the House of Lords, was now about to attack the liberties of the British press, and was astonished and annoyed to find that he, the master of almost all the world, could not prevent one English newspaper from dealing him blows that made him sickly sore, and shook the very foundations of his power. We have already seen how Cobbett lifted up his voice against the abominations of French politics; he had now given up his *Porcupine*, and wrote the *Weekly Political Register*, a paper which enjoyed an existence of thirty years, still playing upon the same string. There was also a French newspaper in London, the *Courier François de Londres*, the organ of the royalist refugees; and a publication of an ambiguous character, scarcely to be called a newspaper, written by a refugee named Peltier, and called *L'Ambigu*. All these papers held the same tone in speaking of Bonaparte, after the peace of Amiens had made him nominally our ally, as they had used against him when our declared enemy. That he should have felt himself aggrieved at this is no wonder: and that he, accus-

tomed to issue his fiat uncontradicted, should have held the British Government capable of putting a stop to it, is equally easy to believe. But the British Government, when appealed to to suppress the obnoxious papers, calmly and dispassionately explained that the laws of England invested them with no power to do so; and, when threatened, firmly and with dignity refused a compliance which, while it perhaps might have prolonged the truce, would have emboldened the First Consul to make demands for concessions still more damaging. Let no parallel be drawn between this case and any of more recent occurrence, for none exists. The refugees of whom Napoleon the First demanded the expulsion from this country, were respectable and loyal Frenchmen, whose fidelity to the old state of things caused their expatriation, not a band of needy adventurers, of every degree and every country, turned into England by the laws of the kingdoms they had outraged—incendiaries and assassins without a spark of patriotism, for their countries had renounced them: whose only motive is the chance of plunder, and who would be at any time ready to head the rabble of the country which gives them shelter, in any throat-cutting or pillaging expedition. Moreover, Napoleon the First had been the enemy, and was only recently the transparently hollow friend of England, never the firm and faithful ally. While, therefore, we hold up to admiration the course taken by the British Government of 1803, we protest against its being made the groundwork for a comparison with any recent events, whose circumstances are as different as loyalty and order are from murder and rapine. The correspondence between the Governments and ambassadors of the First Consul and of his Britannic Majesty, in which the question of the latitude assumed by the English papers is dwelt upon, commences with a letter from M. Otto, minister plenipotentiary from France, to Lord Hawkesbury, dated July 28th, 1802, in which, after

complaining of Peltier and his *L'Ambigu*, he adds, "It is not to Peltier alone, but to the editor of the *Courier François de Londres*, to Cobbett, and to other writers who resemble them, that I have to direct the attention of his Majesty's Government;" and, in his next communication of August 17th, after demanding the expulsion of certain obnoxious personages, he peremptorily requires "that his Majesty's Government will adopt the most effectual measures to put a stop to the unbecoming and seditious publications with which the newspapers and writings printed in England are filled." Lord Hawkesbury, in his instructions to Mr. Merry, our minister, on this subject, dated August 28th, directs him to take a firm footing, and, though "it cannot be denied that some very improper paragraphs have lately appeared in some of the English newspapers against the Government of France," to represent that the First Consul has as good a claim for redress in any of the courts of law as an English subject has, but that, instead of appealing to the British law in a way conformable to the British constitution, his Government has authorised unseemly recriminations in the *Moniteur*. "The paragraphs in the English papers, the publications to which I have above referred, have not appeared under any authority of the British Government, and are disavowed and disapproved of by them: but the paragraph in the *Moniteur* has appeared in a paper avowedly official, for which the Government are therefore considered as responsible as his Majesty's Government is considered responsible for the contents of the *London Gazette*. And this retort (of the *Moniteur*) is not confined to the unauthorised English newspapers or to the other publications of which complaint is now made, but is converted into and made a pretence for a direct attack upon the Government of his Majesty. His Majesty feels it beneath his dignity to make any formal complaints on this occasion; but it has been impossible for me to proceed to the other parts of the

subject without pointing your attention to the conduct of the French Government in this respect, that you may observe upon it in the manner it deserves." . . . "I am sure you must be aware that his Majesty cannot, and never will, in consequence of any representation or any menace from a foreign power, make any concession which can be in the smallest degree dangerous to the liberty of the press, as secured by the constitution of this country. This liberty is justly dear to every British subject." . . . "If the present French Government are dissatisfied with our laws on the subject of libels, or entertain the opinion that the administration of justice in our courts is too tardy and lenient, they have it in their power to redress themselves by punishing the vendors and distributors of such publications within their own territories in any manner that they may think proper, and thereby preventing the publication of them. If they think their present laws are not sufficient for this purpose, they may enact new ones; or, if they think it expedient, they may exercise the right which they have, of prohibiting the importation of any foreign newspapers or periodical publications into the territories of the French Republic."

Here were clearly pointed out the several remedies which the First Consul had to his hand against the annoyances of which he complained; but he would avail himself of none of them, and again insisted, through Talleyrand, that the British Government should take the matter in hand. In a despatch from Lord Whitworth to Lord Hawkesbury, dated "Paris, January 27th, 1803," his lordship adverts to a conversation which he has lately had with Talleyrand, "relating to English newspapers, against which he pronounced a most bitter philippic, assuring me that the First Consul was extremely hurt to find that his endeavours to conciliate had hitherto produced no other effect than to increase the abuse with which the papers in England continually loaded him. He expatiated

much upon this topic, and endeavoured to establish a fact, which I assured him a reference to any one newspaper in Paris would refute, that, during four months, not a word of provocation had appeared in any French journal which could justify a retort from those published in England." Under date of February 21st, 1803, Lord Whitworth relates a similar conversation which he had had with the First Consul himself.*

The debate which ensued upon the production of these papers only tended to confirm ministers in the course they had adopted. In the House of Commons, the demand of the First Consul was treated with ridicule, whilst in the House of Lords, although in the debate of the 23d of May the Earl of Moira found fault with the French papers published in London, particularly the *Courier de Londres*, "a paper understood to be in a great measure under the peculiar patronage of his Majesty's ministers," even Lord Ellenborough, who on other occasions and in other places seldom exhibited so lively a regard for the safety of our most cherished rights, "trusted that, while the licentiousness of the press was restrained, the country would never surrender the just liberty of the press, and that the press would never be subject to a foreign *imprimatur*." So well could both Houses appreciate the blessings of a free press, when not blinded by the passion for maintaining a worthless prerogative. With both Houses in such a humour, the ministers might well have held their ground; and it is perhaps to be regretted that, after adopting so firm and resolute a tone, the English Government should at last have been induced to appease the First Consul by an official prosecution of Peltier for a libel published in *L'Ambigu, or Amusing and Atrocious Varieties, a Journal of the Egyptian Kind*, on which he was tried before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury on the 21st February, 1803. The counsel for the Crown were Spencer Percival,

* Parliamentary History of England, vol. xxxvi. pp. 1267-95.

afterwards Prime Minister, but then Attorney-General, Manners Sutton, Abbot, and Garrow, and the prisoner was defended by Mackintosh and a junior. With this trial we have nothing to do, as *L'Ambigu* certainly does not come within the category of newspapers—it was a political pamphlet of periodical publication, and nothing more.

The debate which we have quoted as reported in the Parliamentary History, is prefaced by some remarks which show us how little provision was then made for the "gentlemen of the press"—how far off they still were from having a "reporters' gallery" of their own:—"The public curiosity was so great that the strangers' gallery was filled at an early hour by persons admitted in an unusual manner, in consequence of which, none of the gentlemen accustomed to report the parliamentary proceedings could gain admission."

John Peltier, who was a journalist irrespectively of his connexion with *L'Ambigu*, was a native of Nantes in Brittany, his father being a wealthy West India merchant. He began writing against the revolutionary doctrines in August, 1789, and was soon secured by our Government for the purpose of discouraging the jacobin notions which were spreading here. It afterwards came out that whilst ministers were prosecuting *L'Ambigu*, they were paying Peltier for writing it. For this service, he received, in 1804, 254*l.*, and in 1805, 277*l.*, and in 1815, the amount had crept up to 787*l.* These payments were for writing and editing in London French journals designed for making an impression on the Continent. On being asked in the House of Commons, on the 30th of April, 1816, what was the meaning of these items, Lord Castlereagh stated that "those grants were made for public and not for private services; and for conveying instruction to the Continent when no other mode could be found."

CHAPTER II.

TRIAL OF COBBETT—ADAM'S DEFENCE, AND WITNESSES TO CHARACTER—PROSECUTION DROPPED—PLUNKETT V. COBBETT—ARREST AND TRIAL OF JUDGE JOHNSON—LAST APPEARANCE OF ALMON AND THE WOODFALLS—THE NEWSPAPERS INCREASED IN SIZE—LIBERTY OF THE PRESS IN PROFILE—PETER STUART AND THE "ORACLE" OFFEND THE HOUSE—GEORGE CANNING—THE "NEWS" ESTABLISHED—JOHN AND LEIGH HUNT—THE BOY CRITIC—THE "TRAVELLER" AND ITS EDITOR, QUIN—THE IMPERIAL EAGLE FLYING AFTER COLERIDGE—A FUNERAL TRAIN OF REPORTERS—ROBERT HERON AND MARK SUPPLE—"A SONG FROM MR. SPEAKER!"—THE "AURORA" STARTED—A BESOTTED EDITOR—WILLIAM JERDAN.

It was not likely that a man like Cobbett, or a paper like his *Political Register*, would long keep clear of the courts of law. Mackintosh, on the trial of Peltier, had asked why his client had been selected for prosecution, and the writers of English newspapers allowed to adopt the same language with impunity. He might have been alluding to Cobbett—at all events the tone of the *Register* was violent enough to justify the suspicion.

The first prosecution which Cobbett suffered in England on account of his newspaper writings, was for libels published in the *Register* of November 5th, 1803, upon the Right Honourable the Earl of Hardwicke, the Lord Lieutenant; Lord Redesdale, Lord Chancellor; the Honourable F. Osborne, Justice of the Irish Court of King's Bench; and Alexander Marsden, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; which came on at Westminster before Lord Ellenborough on the 24th of May, 1804. This is a remarkable trial for several reasons. In the first place, the libel sprang out of the circumstances of Emmett's insane rebellion, and reflected on the conduct of the high

functionaries alluded to as having by their mismanagement paved the way for the march of discontent: in the second place, the trial was remarkable for its result; for the other trial to which it gave birth, and in which Cobbett was called as a witness; for the departure from his former system of caution which he displayed in touching upon the topic at all, whilst the embers of insurrection were yet smouldering, and for the ultimate fixing of the libel upon an Irish judge: but in nothing is it more deserving of notice than in the pleasing portrait which it draws of Cobbett in every relation of life political and social. Erskine opened the proceedings against him with forbearance, although the publication of the libels was at the least imprudent at such a time; and Adam (aftewards Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court of Scotland) replied in an eloquent speech, in the course of which he thus described his client's character:—"I stand here in behalf of a person, whom, though he is accused of a serious crime, I can describe to you as a good father, an excellent husband, a virtuous subject of the king, and one who has uniformly, in all his conduct public and private, in this country and abroad, endeavoured to uphold the true constitution of England, as by law established—a person who is ardently attached to the monarchial frame of this Government, and who has repeatedly stepped forward, to the certain loss of his fortune and the risk of his life, to support the true spirit of the British constitution and the honour and interests of Britain at home—a person who, for twelve long years of public life, has never, till the present moment, been once questioned for a libel on the Government of any country whatever; has never even, by the worst of his enemies, been accused of being an advocate for misrule." To bear out all the details of this flattering character, he called as witnesses Mr. Robert Liston, who had been British Minister in America during Cobbett's residence there; Lord Henry Stewart, the Right Honourable William

Wyndham, Lord Minto, and the Right Honourable Charles Yorke, all of whom bore warm testimony to the truth of the advocate's statement. It certainly must be considered remarkable that a man like Cobbett, endowed with strong sound common sense and warm passions, ballasted with so little education, should have commanded such an estimate from such men. That "ardent mind" which Adam so correctly represents him as possessing, seldom led him away or betrayed him into extravagances; he was unlike Wilkes, with whom he has wrongly been compared, for he always strove to do good, whereas all the good that Wilkes did politically sprang from accidental circumstances. Lord Ellenborough, in directing the jury, of course dwelt upon the character of the offence, not of the man, with which the jury had nothing to do, and of this there could be no doubt—it was a libel, and of a libel he was accordingly found guilty; but he was never called upon to receive sentence, as another trial sprang from this in which he was examined as a witness.*

But two days afterwards he had to sustain an action brought by Plunkett, Solicitor-General of Ireland, for a libel in the *Register*, in the shape of reflection upon the Solicitor-General's conduct of the trial of Emmett. Again Erskine was employed against him; and the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, with five hundred pounds damages.†

The matter of the previous libel on the Lord Lieutenant and officials of Ireland, was now re-opened in the trial of the Honourable Robert Johnson, judge of his Majesty's Court of Common Pleas in Ireland, as the author of the libel. The arrest appears to have been harsh, and offensive to an unnecessary degree; and the arguments as to its legality are to lawyers the most interesting part of the trial. The judge was arrested by warrant under a *post*

* Howell's "State Trials," vol. xxix. pp. 1-54.

† Ibid. vol. xxix. pp. 54-81.

facto Act, which his counsel argued could not operate retrospectively. The matter was discussed before the Court of King's Bench in Ireland, on January the 18th, 22d, 26th, 28th, 29th, and 31st, 1805, when the legality of the arrest was confirmed; but the judge procured a writ of *habeas corpus* from the Court of Exchequer, where the case was again argued on February the 4th and 7th, and subsequently in the Court of Common Pleas, by both which Courts the arrest was held good. On this warrant he was brought over to London for trial, and indicted at the Court of King's Bench; but here he again demurred to the jurisdiction of the Court, and denied its power to try him for an offence committed in Ireland. This question again was argued, June 29th and July 1st, and the jurisdiction of the Court affirmed; and it was not until November the 23d that the trial came on, before Lord Ellenborough. The defence was, that the libel was not written by the judge; and the weight of evidence as to the handwriting appears to have been freely balanced, although Lord Ellenborough most unjustly attempted to throw suspicion on the very respectable witnesses for the defence. We have already said that Cobbett was examined as a witness for the Crown, but his evidence only went to prove that the manuscript was left at his shop, and did not tend to criminate the judge; although it has been said that he owed his escape from judgment, after his conviction for publishing the libel, to the giving of information or the production of handwriting which led to a suspicion of the writer. The jury returned a verdict of Guilty; but the Attorney-General never applied for judgment—in fact, entered a *nolle prosequi* in the next year, and Mr. Johnson was allowed to retire from the bench on a pension for life.*

Some old newspaper celebrities of the last century were now silently disappearing from the scene in which they had so long been actors; and death was busy in the Woodfall

* State Trials, vol. xxix. pp. 82-502.

family. William, or "Memory" Woodfall, the editor and reporter of the *Morning Chronicle* in its earlier years, editor of the *London Packet* in 1772, and founder and proprietor of the unsuccessful *Diary* in 1789, and the younger brother of Henry Sampson Woodfall, who first published "Junius's Letters" in the *Public Advertiser*,* died on the 1st of August, 1803, in Queen-street, Westminster, in the fifty-eighth year of his age. His death appears to have been accelerated by disappointment at the want of success of his newspaper. And on the 12th of December, 1805, his brother, Henry Sampson—Junius's Woodfall—joined him in the grave. They were sons of Henry Woodfall, and both of them enjoyed in life the intimate friendship of the wits of their age, especially of Garrick, Goldsmith, Savage, Colman, Smollett, Hawksworth, Bonnel Thornton, &c. Henry Sampson was the eldest son, and was born on the 21st of January, 1739. It is said of him, that before he had attained his fifth year he read a page of Homer in the Greek in the presence of Pope, with so much fluency that the classical poet was delighted into presenting him with half a crown. At the age of eleven he was sent to St. Paul's School, on leaving which he was apprenticed to his father, and at the early age of nineteen commenced editing and printing the *Public Advertiser*. At this work he continued for thirty-three years, during which period he used to say, "he had been *fined* by the House of Lords, *confined* by the House of Commons, *fined and confined* by the Court of King's Bench, and indicted at the Old Bailey." In 1792 he sold the paper, and he was fortunate in getting rid of it then; for the *Morning Advertiser*, which started directly afterwards, with all the influence of the London publicans, damaged it so much that it fell to the ground in 1794; and, moreover, the year after he had sold it, in

* Lord Campbell, in his "Lives of the Chief Justices," vol. ii. p. 478, makes the mistake of calling Woodfall the printer of the "*Morning*" *Advertiser*.

December, 1793, his printing office was burned to the ground. Henry Sampson Woodfall, and the mystery of Junius's identity, lie buried in Chelsea Churchyard.

John Almon, the friend of Wilkes, the contemporary of the Woodfalls, and the reporter of parliamentary debates for the *London Evening Post* of 1772, drew his last breath on the same day as Henry Sampson Woodfall, the 12th of December, 1805, being by one year Woodfall's senior. He was born at Liverpool, on December the 17th, 1737, and brought up as a printer. But he had an errant taste, and made a desultory, rambling tour upon the Continent, picking up information and experience, and, on his return to London, began working in earnest at his trade. He also found time to write some political pamphlets, &c., one of which attracted the attention of Say, the proprietor of the *Gazetteer*, who at once engaged him to assist in the management of the paper; and he was afterwards, as we have seen, engaged as reporter of the proceedings in Parliament for the *London Evening Post.* His connexion with Wilkes made him known to Lord Temple, who induced him to set up as a bookseller in Piccadilly, where his lordship's patronage brought him much custom, and his own publications much trouble—for he was frequently prosecuted for not only publishing, but for selling publications, which juries then called seditious. Anxiety and imprisonment impaired his health, and in 1781 he was forced, on that account, to retire from business, and he had not long been in seclusion in the country, when he lost his wife. In 1784, he married the widow of William Parker, the printer of the *General Advertiser*, and this brought him again in connexion with the newspaper press, which was only destined to bring to him trouble and misfortune; for, carrying on Parker's paper, he soon got involved in litigation, found his way again into the King's Bench for a libel, and subsequently was, for some time, an outlaw. He died in Hertfordshire, leaving his widow in a state of indigence after all.

The newspapers were creeping on in size. The dimensions, which had been so generously extended by Parliament in 1800, were now again enlarged by a couple of inches, and the 44th of George III., chapter the 98th, allowed in its twenty-second section the size of a newspaper to be thirty-two inches long by twenty-two broad. The same Act fixed the stamp-duty at threepence-halfpenny for a newspaper of that size, any sheet exceeding it being reckoned as two papers, and charged with double duty accordingly.

We have now to record an event which further illustrates the principle that arguments are justifiable in the eyes of a party, when used in its own favour, which would be infamous from the lips of its adversaries, and again exhibits the painful spectacle of the professed friends of the liberty of the press, Sheridan, Fox, Wyndham, Wilberforce, Grey, and Whitbread, taking up the mace of the serjeant-at-arms to silence its voice when opposed to their own views. Peter Stuart, the brother of the proprietor of the *Morning Post*, had published in his paper, the *Oracle*, an article defending Lord Melville, and deploring that popular clamour should have driven him from his post. That none but a partisan could be found to defend Lord Melville, we admit; yet we must at least give Stuart credit for great courage in taking the unpopular side of the question, and allying himself to the desperate fortunes of a degraded minister, accused of malversations in his office. The article, too, was by no means of an intemperate character, nor did it mention any individual by name, or contain any disrespectful allusion to the House of Commons. Yet, on the 25th of April, 1805, Mr. Grey, one of those friends of liberty who like the liberty to be all on one side, made a complaint against the *Oracle* for the publication of what he was pleased to consider a libel on the House, and moved that Peter Stuart, the printer and publisher of

the paper, should be ordered to attend the House. A desultory conversation ensued, but the motion was eventually carried; and Stuart, attending in obedience to the order, and apologising, was ordered into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms. On the 2d of May, he petitioned the House for his discharge, and, as he attempted in some measure to justify the view he had taken of the dismissal of Lord Melville, his defence was at once denounced as an aggravation of his original offence. The House was in no temper to argue questions with newspaper people yet—it would have them apologise—down on their knees, and with head bowed. It was simply refractory in an editor to say a word in self-defence—it was beneath the dignity of the House to listen. The tone adopted by all the friends of liberty in the House is expressed in what Whitbread said—he denied the right of newspaper-writers to sit in judgment on the House. The Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer found themselves, for the nonce, in the curious position of pleading for the press; but the old spirit—the ancient feeling of contempt for all connected with it—showed itself beneath the surface. With the exception of Canning (himself a writer in the *Oracle*), who justified Stuart's vindication of himself, the speakers on the side of clemency seemed to insinuate more that the dignity of the House would be best consulted by treating such things as newspapers and their writers with contempt; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointedly says, "It was true that the petition was couched in a loftier style than necessary, but he believed it was common to all connected with the press to assume to themselves an extraordinary degree of importance." The motion of Sir Henry Mildmay (who had presented Stuart's petition), that the printer be brought up to the bar and discharged with a reprimand, was ultimately carried by a majority of 142 over 121, and Stuart

was duly reprimanded, and discharged on payment of the fees.*

The beginning of this year also gave birth to a paper, which made some noise in its time, the *News*. It was established by John Hunt, who took into his counsels his younger brother, Leigh Hunt; and the result was that the ex-Blue-coat boy went to live with his brother in Brydges-street, and write the theatrical department of the new paper. This he candidly admits he did with some pomp and vanity; but where is the youth of his age who would not have felt himself puffed up by the sight of theatrical stars bowing before him, and theatrical managers seeking his favour? For it was then the custom for them to be on such friendly terms with the editors and critics, that they could always make sure of friendly criticism in exchange for free orders and good dinners; and they were startled by the apparition of this boy-critic, who stood haughtily aloof from them, wrapped up in reserve, and ostentatiously impartial. The reviews of new pieces or the remarks on the players who played in them had, up till now, been usually short—often prepared at the instance of the parties under review, and not seldom, according to Mr. Reynolds, even written by themselves. But nothing of this kind could be arranged with the *News*—the two brothers rejected all overtures, and Leigh went honestly to the theatre, sat out the performance, judged for himself, and wrote his candid opinion. This course did not make him popular among the actors, but it raised the circulation of the *News*. These were not Leigh Hunt's first essays for the newspapers. A short time previously he might have been seen dropping an occasional paper, in which the style of Colman and Thornton's "World" was closely copied, into the letter-box of the *Traveller*, an evening paper belonging to the body of commercial travellers (in the same

* "Parliamentary Register," vol. ii. 1805, pp. 200-313; and Hansard's "Debates," vol. iv. 1805, pp. 381, 430, and 532.

way as the *Morning Advertiser* now belongs to the licensed victuallers), and edited by Quin, but since incorporated with the *Globe;* and, on Saturdays, when his essay had appeared, emerging, with beaming countenance, from Bolt Court, with the five or six copies of the paper with which he was rewarded, as great a man as the jovial writers whom he admired, and whose signature he had adopted, with the addition of "Junior"—for if we were to look over his shoulder, we should find that that article of which he is admiring the appearance in print so much, is signed, "Mr. Town, junior, Critic and Censor-General."* We shall presently have occasion again to see the enthusiastic boy settled into an earnest man, and paying the penalty which all earnest men who wrote newspapers had to pay in those days.

We next come to an incident, which, whilst it further illustrates the great irritation which Bonaparte felt at the plain speaking of the English press, also shows Coleridge's writings in the *Morning Post* were of a more important character than Mr. Stuart would have us believe. In the course of a debate in the House of Commons, Fox asserted that the rupture of the truce of Amiens had its origin in certain essays which had appeared in the *Morning Post,* and which were known to have proceeded from the pen of Coleridge. Whatever amount of truth may have belonged to the statement (and there is no doubt the writing of the newspapers had a great deal to do with the breaking up of that solemn mockery, dignified with the unmerited name of the *peace* of Amiens), Coleridge naturally felt proud of the influence it ascribed to his writings, for he says: "I am not, indeed, silly enough to take as anything more than a violent hyperbole of party debate, Mr. Fox's assertion, or I should be proud to have the words inscribed on my tomb."† But Fox added an un-

* Autobiography of Leigh Hunt.

† Biographia Literaria, vol. i. p. 221.

generous and malicious hint that the writer was at Rome, within the reach of Bonaparte. The information reached the ears for which it was uttered, and an order was sent from Paris to compass the arrest of Coleridge. It was in the year 1806, when the poet was making a tour in Italy; the news reached him at Naples, through a brother of the illustrious Humboldt, as Mr. Gillman says;* or in a friendly warning from Prince Jerome Bonaparte, as we have it on the authority of Mr. Cottle;† and the Pope appears to have been reluctant to have had a hand in the business, and, in fact, to have furnished him with a passport, if not with a carriage for flight: and he eventually got to Leghorn, where he got a passage by an American ship bound for England; but his escape coming to the ears of Bonaparte, a look-out was kept for the ship, and she was chased by a French cruiser, which threw the captain into such a state of terror, that he made Coleridge throw all his journals and papers overboard. So, at least, says Mr. Gillman; but Mr. Cottle not only makes no mention of this episode of the flight, but says Coleridge spoke in high terms of the conduct and kindness of the captain.

The reporters of the old school of Woodfall and Perry were now being gathered in—the "memory" reporters were disappearing from the scene, and the new men brought with them a system of shorthand—death was at work in "the gallery," and the last of the old school were going where it was no breach of privilege to enter. On the 13th of April, 1807, Robert Heron was released by the friendly hand of fever from that abject, degraded state of the extremest poverty which we only read of in the lives of great geniuses who are also great prodigals—having exhausted every means of relief—having ruined mind and body—having worn out and disgusted every friend; shipwrecked in the streets of London, and carried

* Gillman's "Life of Coleridge," vol. i. pp. 180-1.

† Cottle's "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey," p. 311.

into the haven of a fever hospital, only to die a pauper's death, unknown, unwept. Fortune raised him from an earthen floor only to dash him against the marble steps up which she had led him; he had better never have left the low estate in which he was born than have fallen from the high position to which he had attained. Heron was born at New Galloway in Scotland on the 6th of November, 1764, the son of a weaver; but he gave promise of such ability in his early years that influence was exerted in his favour, and he was got into the University of Edinburgh in 1780. On leaving college, he was willing to lose his time, and trust for his living to the poor pay of the publishers for translating works from the French. But even small as was the remuneration for this inglorious work, he could, with his great readiness and facility of translation, have earned a tolerable subsistence but for his already overweening extravagance, which speedily brought him into a gaol, where he wrote his History of Scotland, surrounded for six years, from 1793 to 1799, by all the squalor, misery, dirt, starvation, and disease of the prisons of that period, and with the depressing consciousness that the work he was engaged on was for the benefit of his creditors, and to clear off the encumbrance of past extravagances, not to provide for future wants. In 1799, he came to London, and got work from the booksellers and the newspapers; but as soon as he got its reward he would indulge in indolent extravagance till he had not a shilling in his pocket or a shirt to his back. Then he would apply laboriously to study in an old greasy dressing-gown, and sit to it so resolutely that his eyes would grow weak, and he would be obliged to work with a green veil before them. Perfect was his character as a poor, dissipated, clever, thoughtless author of the stamp from which we have already had so many impressions; we are not told where he lived, but we feel that to complete the picture, it must have been in Grub-street. His employ-

ment on the press was various—his engagements short, usually abruptly and violently terminated by his own misconduct—his emoluments ample, for his abilities were bright and versatile. On first coming to London he was parliamentary reporter of the *Oracle*, the *Porcupine*, and the *Morning Post*, successively. In 1802, he was made editor of the *British Press* by the booksellers who started it, but he only kept the place a fortnight. For a few months he was editor of *Lloyd's Evening Post*, and then through the influence of an Under-Secretary of State was made nominal editor of one of those French newspapers which were published in London to revile Bonaparte and his Government. In 1805, he had also been made editor of the *British Neptune*, a weekly paper, but from some whim or caprice he threw up both appointments in 1806, and started immediately a paper of his own, the *Fame*; but, from his irregularity and dissipated habits, it was a perfect failure, and only involved him in inextricable difficulties. Deserted by all the friends whose patience, forbearance, and charity he had worn out, he got into Newgate, where he dragged on a wretched existence for months.* He died at last in the Fever Hospital in Gray's Inn Lane, without a relation or friend near him, having drunk the cup of poverty to the very dregs.

In the same month of the same year as Heron, died Mark Supple, the big-boned Irish reporter in the staff of Perry on the *Morning Chronicle*. Supple's fame now rests on the anecdote told of him by Peter Finnerty (a fellow-reporter, who survived him only four years), of an after-dinner feat—he had dined at Bellamy's, as was his wont—of taking advantage of a pause in the debate, to roar out from the gallery for "A song from Mr. Speaker!" The Speaker, the precise Addington, was paralysed; the House was thunder-struck—there was clearly no precedent for such a proceeding as this; in the next minute the comic

* D'Israeli's "Calamities of Authors."

prevailed over the serious, and the House was in a roar of laughter, led off by Pitt. However, for appearance's sake, the Serjeant-at-Arms was obliged to seek out the offender, but no one in the gallery would betray Mark Supple, and the official was about retiring at fault, when Supple indicated to him by a meaning nod that a fat Quaker who sat near him was the delinquent. The poor Quaker was taken into custody accordingly; but in the midst of a scene of confusion and excitement, the real culprit was discovered, and, after a few hours' durance, was allowed to go off, on making an apology.

Many of the reporters and editors of this period were "sad dogs" indeed. The business of their profession keeping them out of their beds half the night, they kept out the remaining half of it of their own choice; and the little hours were consumed in tavern hilarity, where, it must be admitted, they found themselves in company with peers and gentlemen. Neither was this rule without exception; there were many quiet, steady men coming upon the press, and the reign of the rackety ones was drawing to a close. A specimen of one of the besotted geniuses of the press is given by Mr. Jerdan in the history of his life. In 1807 the hotel-keepers of the West End, seeing the success to which the *Morning Advertiser* had attained among the Licensed Victuallers generally, attempted to establish a paper of a superior class, fit to be laid every morning on the tables of their coffee-rooms. The arrangements were completed. Among the reporters were Mark Supple, and William Jerdan (of *Literary Gazette* fame)—and the *Aurora* blazed upon the town. The editor was a model—moulded in clay: "Our editor," says Mr. Jerdan, "was originally intended for the Kirk, and was a well-informed person; but to see him at or after midnight, in his official chair a-writing his leader, was a trial for a philosopher. With the slips of paper before him, a pot of porter close at hand, and a pipe of tobacco in his mouth or casually laid

down, he proceeded *secundum artem*. The head hung, with the chin on his collar-bone, as in deep thought—a whiff—another—a tug at the beer—and a line and a half or two lines committed to the blotted paper. By this process, repeated with singular regularity, he would contrive, between the hours of twelve and three, to produce as decent a column as the ignorant public required."*

With such an editor, and a proprietary each of whom was desirous of having his own views of politics expressed, it is not very surprising that the *Aurora* soon disappeared from the political firmament.

* Autobiography of William Jerdan, vol. i. pp. 83-6.

CHAPTER III.

TRIAL OF THE "INDEPENDENT WHIG"—CURIOUS ARGUMENTS OF ADOLPHUS—A BIASSED JUDGE AND A REMARKABLE SENTENCE—PROSECUTION OF SEVEN EDITORS—THE "EXAMINER" ESTABLISHED—PIOUS PAPERS—THE "INSTRUCTOR"—THE PRESS IN PARLIAMENT AND THE COURTS OF LAW—THE "ANTI-GALLICAN MONITOR"—LEWIS GOLDSMITH—COBBETT'S RIVAL, BLAGDON, AND HIS "POLITICAL REGISTER"—A TALE OF TROUBLE—STATISTICS—HIGH PRICE OF PAPER—HUSKISSON PROPOSES RELIEF—SIR VICARY GIBBS—ATTACK UPON THE "EXAMINER" AND "MORNING CHRONICLE"—PERRY'S ABLE DEFENCE—DEFEAT AND DISCOMFITURE OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FRETFUL AGAIN—WHITBREAD, A CHAMPION OF THE PRESS—THE STANDING ORDER—SHERIDAN AND THE REPORTERS—WILBERFORCE REBUKES THE PRESS, AND WYNDHAM DENOUNCES IT—THE MOTION LOST—MACAULAY ON PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING—INDIGNATION MEETINGS—SIR FRANCIS BURDETT—HIS CHALLENGE TO THE HOUSE—STEPHEN'S GREAT SPEECH—THE "DAY"—EUGENIUS ROCHE—HIS ASSOCIATES ON THE "DAY," ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, JOSEPH DAVEY, AND CHARLES PHILLIPS—JOHN SCOTT AND HOGAN—JOHN MAYNE.

THE year 1808 witnessed another prosecution, on an Attorney-General's *ex-officio* information. On June the 16th there came on, before a special jury, in the Court of King's Bench, the trial of John Harriott Hart, the printer, and Henry White, the proprietor of the *Independent Whig*, a Sunday paper, for libels published in that journal of the 17th and 24th of January, reflecting upon the administration of public justice and trial by jury, and particularly in reference to the judge and jury before whom Captains Bennett and Chapman had been recently tried and acquitted of a charge of murdering some seamen.* A curious

* Campbell's "Nisi Prius Cases," vol. i. p. 359.

point was raised at the outset by Adolphus, then young at the bar, who appeared for the defendants. On a copy of the record being produced, the quick eye of Adolphus detected a literal error in it, and required that it should be compared with the original. This was done, and he then objected that, inasmuch as a word in the original record is spelt "criminal" and in the copy "crimnial," the latter is not an exact copy as required by law, and consequently cannot be received. This ingenious argument was overruled, and he then set up a defence that the libels did not overstep the line of fair criticism, and had not the evil and sinister motives attributed to them, in the damnatory language of the law, by the Attorney-General. The jury, however, found the defendants guilty;* and the sentence was only deferred to await the result of another trial for a libel in the same paper, upon Lord Ellenborough, as judge in the case of the two captains, and which, in the shape of letters signed "Humanitas," and "Junius," had reflected upon his administration of justice. The trial came on on the 25th of June; and the evidence having been given, Justice Grose, in his summing up, thus guides—or we might with more propriety say, drives—the jury: "This is a gross, scandalous, and abominable libel." . . . "I have no hesitation in saying that anything more libellous I never heard or read;" adding, with a turn which almost sounds ironical, "If *you* are of that opinion—*but it is for you to consider the question*—you will return your verdict accordingly." Of course a half-educated jury, uninstructed what was a libel in the eyes of the law, but only told what was a libel in the eyes of the judge—only lately made to understand that it was within their province to judge of the intent of a libel—a right which Mr. Justice Grose so grudgingly and even equivocally concedes to them, was ruled by the opinion which he took it upon himself to press upon them, and found the defendants guilty. An attempt,

* Howell's "State Trials," vol. xxx. pp. 1131-94.

on the 29th of June, to procure a new trial, on the ground that no proof of publication had been established, failed; but on the 2d of July, when the defendants were brought up for judgment, they put in affidavits in extenuation, to the effect that they were not the authors of the libel, but that the real writers were willing to save them from its consequences, and take them upon themselves, and that John Gale Jones, an apothecary, was the author of the letter signed "Junius," and William Augustus Miles, Esq., wrote another letter, but that the author of the letter signed "Humanitas" was unknown to them. The sentence of the court was, that Hart be imprisoned in Gloucester, and White in Dorchester gaol, for a term of eighteen months for each of the libels, and each find security, himself in five hundred pounds, and two sureties in two hundred and fifty pounds each, for his good behaviour for five years.* This arbitrary imprisonment in country gaols, for an offence (if any) committed in London, was appealed against to the House of Lords, on the ground that the Court of King's Bench could not legally commit to any other than its own prison. The matter was argued May 16th, 1809,† and the judgment of the Court of King's Bench unanimously affirmed.

On July 8th, the editors of seven other London papers were amerced in penalties of 25*l.* each, for publishing the same or similar paragraphs.

Early in this year John Hunt and his brother Leigh had set up the *Examiner* in joint partnership. This new weekly paper was started upon reform, or what were then considered radical principles, and soon gained a circulation even among readers of quieter politics by the literary turn which it took from the first. Its politics were indeed considered so extreme as to verge upon the republican; but Leigh Hunt, who was the most active in the manage-

* State Trials, vol. xxx. pp. 1194-1346.

† Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. iv. pp. 583-98.

ment and tone of the paper, has since declared that he was always warmly attached to the Constitution, and that both he and his brother abhorred the republican principles then recently developed in France and America. He at the time of starting the *Examiner* held a clerkship in the War Office, which had been given him by Mr. Addington, afterwards Lord Sidmouth, in consideration of his father's loyal services during the American Revolution; but, feeling that he could not hold this post compatibly with his independence as a public journalist writing on the Opposition side, and foreseeing, in fact, that he would be discharged, he at once resigned his situation. The articles of the *Examiner* framed in that essay form which they have continued to preserve, soon attracted public notice, and, in the very first year of its existence, a series on "The Folly and Danger of Methodism" was reprinted from its columns in a separate form. These articles were called forth by the cant and assumption of religion, which, arrayed in gilded trappings, showed itself in all and the most incongruous places. A "religious hoy" started daily for Margate; "serious" cooks advertised for situations in pious families; "a religious footman" advertises for a place where he would never be required to deny his master or mistress to visitors, as "anything in the shape of a lie is so distasteful to him;" and, what is more in connexion with our subject, a religious newspaper—the first of its kind—appeared in 1808. The following is part of the announcement of this new paper, the *Instructor*:—"The common newspapers are absorbed in temporal concerns, while the consideration of those which are eternal is postponed. The business of life has superseded the claims of immortality, and the monarchs of the world have engrossed an attention which would have been more properly devoted to the Saviour of the Universe." . . . "The columns of this paper will be supplied by pious reflections: suitable comments, to improve the dispensations of Providence, will

be introduced, and the whole conducted with an eye to our spiritual as well as temporal welfare." But, with an eye to business (as a modern paper has been humorously said to "mix rum and true religion"), it is to give "the latest news up to four o'clock on the day of publication, together with the most recent religious occurrences. The prices of stock and correct market-tables will also be accurately detailed."*. The price of the paper was sixpence.

The House of Commons and the press were still at feud. On the 17th of February, 1809, Mr. Beresford complained of the *Morning Post* ascribing to him remarks upon Colonel Wardle in the discussion on the conduct of the Duke of York, which he had never uttered; and Whitbread was the only man in the House who found a word in mitigation of punishment. On the 27th of March, that worthy champion presented a petition from White and Hart of the *Independent Whig*, complaining of cruelties which they were suffering in prison; but the House heard it with impatience, and it was got rid of by the Speaker conveniently discovering an erasure in it, which rendered it informal and incapable of being received.

Nor did the newspapers fare better in the courts of law. On the 7th of May, 1809, George Beaumont, the printer of the *British Guardian*, a Sunday paper, was sentenced, in the Court of King's Bench, to be imprisoned in Newgate for two years, to pay a fine of 50*l.*, and to give security in the amount of 500*l.*, for publishing a letter to the King, signed "Tiberius Gracchus," insinuating that his Majesty was ruled and guided by an improper influence. Private character was as sensitive as royal and ministerial character, and, on June 29th, the Earl of Leicester brought an action for libel against the proprietors of the *Morning Herald*, and got 1,000*l.* damages.†

* Advertisement in the "Evangelical Magazine," for September, 1807.

† Campbell's "Nisi Prius Cases," vol. ii. pp. 251-5.

Two additions to the newspaper press, whose bark awoke the echoes, but which are now known only to collectors, date their brief but noisy existence in this year, the *Anti-Gallican Monitor*, of "Lewis Goldsmith, notary public," the friend of Sampson Perry, and the arch-traitor, of whose career we propose to take a glance shortly; and the *Political Register*, started by Francis William Blagdon in opposition to Cobbett. Poor Blagdon experienced to the full the career of "ups and downs" in which Fortune delights to toss some of her children of the press. He was originally a horn-boy employed to sell the *Sun*, whenever it contained any extraordinary news; he then was employed as amanuensis to Mr. Willich, under whom he studied German and French, and having acquired a tolerable knowledge of those languages, he brought out a monthly volume of translated voyages and travels. In connexion with the reviewer, F. Prevost, he set up the "Flowers of Literature," of which seven annual volumes were published, and at the same time became editor of the *Phœnix* newspaper. But in an ambitious flight he thought to soar into the regions of conflict with Cobbett, and started the *Political Register*, the adoption of which title was scarcely honest, to begin with; and, disappointed of the fame and profit he had expected to derive from it, found himself in a short time totally ruined by the speculation. With a large family to support, he found inadequate means in the employment he accepted as assistant or co-editor of the *Morning Post*—his position was scarcely that of sub-editor—but incessant hard work broke up his constitution, and he fell into a general decline, which terminated in his death in June, 1819, in the forty-second year of his age. He is described as a man of warm feelings and generous impulses—"amiable, ingenuous, and benevolent."*

The number of newspapers is now handed down to us

* Timperley's "Dictionary of Printers and Printing," p. 870.

as having reached one hundred and fifty-six in England (of which London produced sixty-three and the provinces ninety-three), twenty-four in Scotland, and fifty-seven in Ireland.

The trade was not, however, in a commercial point of view, in a very flourishing condition, the price of paper was exceedingly high this year,—an advance which the newspaper proprietors could not meet by a rise in their charges, as the discount of ten per cent. which the Stamp Office allowed on the duty was confined to papers whose price did not exceed sixpence. To meet this, and to afford relief to the newspapers for a time, Mr. Huskisson appealed to the House of Commons on the 27th of April, 1809. His proposition was at once favourably listened to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and there was only one member who declared against the concession; and Mr. Huskisson accordingly obtained leave to bring in "A Bill to amend the 37th George the Third, relating to the Restrictions on Newspapers"—the Act, we have already seen, passed by Pitt and his colleagues.

The new year brought fresh prosecutions—a heavy cloud was gathering over the *Examiner*, which threatened to discharge a tempest of Government vengeance upon the writer. An *ex-officio* information was laid against it by Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Attorney-General, for an alleged seditious libel, the offensive words of which were, "Of all monarchs, indeed, since the revolution, the successor of George the Third will have the finest opportunity of becoming nobly popular." An information was also filed against the proprietors of the *Morning Chronicle* for copying the article on the 2d of October of the past year; and on the 24th of February, 1810, the trial of John Lambert, printer, and James Perry, proprietor of the latter paper, came on before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury. Perry defended himself and his printer, and boldly denied the charge in the information, of any intention or design

to subvert the government of the country; declaring the liberty of the press to be now upon its trial. "The *Morning Chronicle*," he exclaims, "stands now, as it did in 1793, in the front of the battle, not only for itself, but for the liberty of the press of England!" His eloquent and bold yet temperate address (on which he was complimented by the Attorney-General) told upon the jury, who returned a verdict of Not Guilty; on hearing which, Sir Vicary Gibbs withdrew his indictment against the *Examiner* on a similar charge.*

But the angry passions of the country were now about to be provoked and its indignation raised to a pitch of frenzy by the ill-advised attempt made by ministers to exclude the reporters of the newspapers from the House of Commons, during the delicate investigation into the conduct of the government in sending out the disastrous expedition to the Scheldt. There had been such a lull in the animosities of the House against the press that one might have supposed it was getting reconciled to seeing its debates reported. It is true there had been one or two complaints of breach of privilege lately; but the temperate tone in which they were brought forward, and the manner in which they were allowed to fall to the ground, seemed to indicate a more liberal feeling among the members. On the 30th of June, 1807, Sturges Bourne complained of the *Morning Chronicle*, for making a charge against him, which at one time would have been looked upon with a very severe eye, and would certainly have brought the writer in contact with the Serjeant-at-arms—a charge of jobbing, in his late capacity of Secretary to the Treasury, with Sir Henry Mildmay. Bourne, whilst repudiating the charge, declines to press the matter upon the House, or to seek for any punishment against the paper, only noticing it that the editor may not repeat such an asser-

* Howell's "State Trials," and Campbell's "Nisi Prius Cases," vol. ii. pp. 398-406.

tion. Again, on the 17th of January, 1809, Mr. Beresford had complained of a misrepresentation of his remarks on Colonel Wardle during one of the examinations into the conduct of the Duke of York, which the *Morning Post* had made in reporting his speech: but left it to the House to say whether he should carry it farther. Whitbread, ever ready when the press was attacked, for one said "No!" and the House agreed with him in feeling, although not so emphatically. On the 29th of January in this very year, 1810, Mr. Manning had made a complaint of the *Morning Chronicle* having misrepresented the course he had taken on the proposition for an inquiry into the late defeats and disasters; but, after a desultory conversation, in which Whitbread again stood up as the advocate of the press, the Speaker suggested that the House should proceed to other business, as no one seemed disposed to make a motion on the subject. An incident in this debate may be mentioned by the way, as showing how foolishly a few of the members still affected to hold the press at arm's length. Wilberforce and one or two others complained that their names had appeared on the division in the wrong lists. The simplest and most obvious course to take—and the course which would now be adopted by every member of Parliament—would have been to write to the editor; but Wilberforce and his friends possibly thought this would be a tacit admission of the assumed rights of the newspapers, and so preferred appealing to the House to set them right with their constituents.

The public, having these relaxations of the prerogative in its memory, were not prepared for the application which was made and agreed to at the commencement of the discussion, for the enforcement of the standing order which required strangers to withdraw, which its mover, Yorke, acknowledged to be solely with a view to the exclusion of the reporters. No such delicacy had been

exhibited towards the King's son, the Duke of York, but the papers were allowed, morning after morning, to feed the public craving with all the scandal and revelations of the examination into his conduct. But the ministers were more chary of their own conduct than of the Duke of York's, and the standing order was put in force on the 25th of January. On the 6th of February, Sheridan rose to move for a committee to inquire into the propriety of this step, and, in characterising it as not only uncalled for, but unconstitutional, bears the following testimony to the correctness and impartiality of newspaper reports:—"In the communication of the transactions of that House, the editors of the public journals had been uniformly guided by the strictest impartiality. There never was exerted any undue influence—never felt any improper bias in giving parliamentary reports; but, if there was a point upon which they were more scrupulous than another relative to the proceedings of that House, it was in correctly and fully communicating the details of evidence when examined at the bar. Were even the editors inclined, from motives of their own, or corrupt views of self-interest, to excite any improper prejudice by mutilated or unjustifiable statements, he was confident that not one of the gentlemen who were in the habit of taking the reports of that House, would lend himself to such an improper service." Wyndham spoke next, and his voice was as one coming from the previous century; to the amazement of the House and the country, he delivered himself of the wildest opinions of a hundred years before. After professing himself to be a friend to the liberty of the press, he confessed that he could not see any advantage to the public from the debates being published in the newspapers—"he could not say in what respect the country had gained anything." He insanely asks, "What was the value to their constituents of knowing what was passing in that House? Supposing they should never

know, it was the only difference between a representative government and a democracy;" and instantly adds, "If this practice had been tolerated, winked at, and suffered, it was no reason that persons should make a trade of what they obtained from the galleries, amongst which persons were to be found men of all descriptions—bankrupts, lottery-office keepers, footmen, and decayed tradesmen." . . . . "He did not think accounts in the daily papers were so desirable as others did." . . . . ."He did not know any of the conductors of the press, but he understood them to be a set of men who would give in to the corrupt misrepresentation of opposite sides, and he was therefore determined not to lend his hand to abrogate an order which was made to correct an abuse." Lord Folkestone, Sir Francis Burdett, Tierney, and Lyttleton spoke in favour of Sheridan's motion, and Peter Moore on the same side took occasion to vindicate the editors of the newspapers as "a meritorious class of individuals." Yorke replied in opposition to the motion, and Sheridan wound up the discussion with that brilliant speech, in which the impassioned orator exclaimed, "Give me but the liberty of the press, and I will give to the minister a venal House of Peers—I will give him a corrupt and servile House of Commons—I will give him the full sway of the patronage of office—I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence—I will give him all the power that place can confer upon him, to purchase up submission and overawe resistance; and yet, armed with the liberty of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed—I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared with that mightier engine—I will shake down from its height corruption, and bury it amidst the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter." Of course such monstrous doctrines as Wyndham had given utterance to, came in for their share of condemnation; he declared that he indeed deplored the speech he had heard from Wyndham's lips, and, for the first time in his life,

almost regretted that anyone *should* be present in the House to report such sentiments to the world. His motion, however, was rejected by one hundred and sixty-six votes to eighty.*

Seventeen years afterwards Macaulay describes the public as reposing its confidence in the gallery of the House of Commons for the protection of its liberty:—"If the Commons were to suffer the Lords to amend money bills, we do not believe that the people would care one straw about the matter. If they were to suffer the Lords even to originate money bills, we doubt whether such a surrender of their constitutional rights would excite half so much dissatisfaction as the exclusion of strangers from a single important discussion. The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm. The publication of the debates, a practice which seemed to the most liberal statesman of the old school full of danger to the great safeguards of public liberty, is now regarded by many persons as a safeguard tantamount, and more than tantamount, to all the rest together."† This was the conviction that was taking possession of the people, when Yorke's motion and Wyndham's speech were made. As may be expected, they raised a storm all over the country. Meetings were called to protest against the one and to condemn the other. Public indignation was loudly expressed at the monstrous expressions of Wyndham upon the conductors of the newspapers; and, among others, a debating club called the British Forum proposed the subject for discussion at one of its meetings. The prospectus was posted on the walls, and being seen by a member of the House of Commons, was voted a breach of privilege, and its author, John Gale Jones, summarily committed to Newgate. This arbitrary proceeding brought a champion into the lists, who chose *Cobbett's Political Register* for his

* Hansard's "Debates," vol. xv. (1810), pp. 323-46.

† Macaulay's "Essays;" Hallam's "Constitutional History."

ground, and on the 24th of March, 1810, the gauntlet was thrown down to the House by Sir Francis Burdett, in a letter which appeared in that publication, headed "Sir Francis Burdett to his Constituents, denying the power of the House of Commons to imprison the People of England." The challenge was taken up by Mr. Lethridge, who brought it before the House on the 27th; but lacking the courage to do more, left it to Sir Robert Salusbury to move the extreme measure that Sir Francis Burdett be committed to the Tower. The debate that ensued was principally characterised by extreme violence and low personalities—such as Sir Joseph Yorke's calling Whitbread a "brewer of bad porter"—but after lasting for three days it ended in the motion being carried. Burdett's celebrated letter to the Speaker announcing that he should resist the authority of the House—the unsuccessful visits of the Serjeant-at-arms to Piccadilly, with a view to executing the warrant of committal—his apprehension of the menacing mobs that were assembled round the house—his forcible entry with the assistance of the military, and capture of Burdett—the escort to the Tower amidst the murmurings of the assembled thousands—the attack on, and stoning of the soldiers on their return—the soldiers' firing on the people in self-defence—the deaths and the verdicts of a coroner's jury of "Wilful murder" against the Life Guardsmen—the refusal of the House of Commons to listen to the petitions of Westminster and Middlesex, praying for the release of Burdett—and the indignation meetings in every part of the country, are too well remembered to require more than a retrospective glance. The breaking up of the session liberated Burdett in due course on the 21st of June, and great were the preparations made to escort him from the Tower. A procession of two hundred carriages, accompanied with music, flags, and banners, went to fetch the popular hero and lead him out to liberty—but he had left some hours previously by the water-gate,

and gone homewards by the "silent highway" of the Thames; so the crowd had to content themselves with conducting the lesser hero, Mr. Gale Jones, through the arch-spanned and banner-crossed streets of the city.*

Wyndham's silly speech indirectly provoked another discussion, which called forth a defence of the press and the reporters only second in eloquence to Sheridan's; the magnificent speech of James Stephen, Member of Parliament and Master in Chancery, but a *quondam* reporter of the *Morning Post*, and editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. A clique of the benchers of Lincoln's Inn, inflated with wine and elevated into a great opinion of self-importance, had at an after-dinner sitting passed a bye-law that no man who had ever written for a newspaper for hire should be allowed to perform his preparatory exercises, in order to his admission to the bar. This illiberal resolution, which was of course aimed at those young aspirants for the higher honours of the law who were reporting for the newspapers to give them the means of winning them, was passed upon the requisition of eight barristers, the first name on the list being that of Clifford, who had so often been the paid advocate of the press, and never been known to have a scruple about accepting his fees; and the regulation was passed by a select company of four benchers only. Against this cruel restriction a Mr. Farquharson appealed by petition to the House of Commons, and on the 23d of March, Sheridan brought the subject under its notice. He at once annihilates Wyndham's fabrications, by giving the following account of the reporters' gallery of the time:—"Of about twenty-three gentlemen who were now employed reporting parliamentary debates for the newspapers, no less than eighteen were men regularly educated at the universities of Oxford or Cambridge, Edinburgh or Dublin; most of them graduates at those universities, and several of them had gained prizes and other distinctions there by

* Annual Register, vol. lii. pp. 257-267.

their literary attainments." Wyndham (at whose instance the gallery had been cleared at the commencement of the debate) left the house in a pet, and James Stephen stood up to support the consideration of the petition, and to point out the difficulties and delays which the student for the bar had to encounter, the embarrassments and evils caused by want of means and of employment, and the opening which the gallery offered for a wholesome and profitable exercise of his abilities. All this he did at so great length and with so great eloquence that we forbear to quote single passages of his speech, and the whole is too long for giving here, but at its conclusion he boldly avowed that it was no fancy sketch, for, thirty years ago, the case had been *his own*. He also bore testimony to the respectability and talents of the reporters, and particularly alluded to the high character of Perry and his staff. The Attorney-General opposed the motion—not on the merits of the case, which he could not deny, but because there was a remedy by applying to the judges; and the Solicitor-General paid a glowing compliment to Stephen's speech, and expressed his regret at having unguardedly signed the requisition to the benchers, and his desire to see the bye-law abolished. Sir John Anstruther and Croker, the former as a bencher, disapproving of the bye-law, suggested that the motion should be withdrawn, and the benchers would revoke it; and this arrangement was eventually agreed to.*

James Stephen was born in the West Indies, and sent home for his education. Selecting the law for a profession, he entered himself of Lincoln's Inn, but having little interest, he got little business, and was glad to increase his slender means by reporting the parliamentary debates for the *Morning Post*, and afterwards, we are told (although this does not appear quite clear to us), accepting the editorship of the *Morning Chronicle*. If he were connected with that paper at all, it could only have been in assisting

* Hansard's "Debates," vol. xvi. (1810), pp. 27-39.

Perry occasionally, as Spankie did, but he was certainly not the editor, in the full meaning of the term. He procured a situation in the Admiralty Court of St. Christopher's, where he amassed a considerable fortune; and, returning to England, married into the family of Wilberforce, and entered Parliament. Stephen wrote several pamphlets in favour of ministers, and supported them in the House of Commons; and his support was rewarded with a Mastership in Chancery.*

The speech of Wyndham, which led to the Burdett disturbance and the Lincoln's Inn resolutions, also brought in its train of consequences trouble to the *Day*, the auctioneers' new morning paper, then recently started by Phillips & Co. of Bond-street, and other gentlemen of the hammer and rostrum. Some severe remarks on the behaviour of the soldiers in firing upon the populace, on the occasion of Sir Francis Burdett being carried to the Tower, having appeared in the *Day*, a Government prosecution was commenced; and Eugenius Roche, the editor, together with the printer and publisher, put upon their trial for a seditious libel. Roche, from whose honest heart and pure mind anything like sedition or treason could never come, pleaded that the paragraphs appeared without his knowledge: that, the committee of management requiring the paper to appear punctually at a particular hour in the morning, the printer was authorised to insert anything that the proprietor gave him, even if it had not passed before the eyes of the editor. He also urged in extenuation, that the principles of the *Day* had undergone a change, and that the paper now gave a warm support to Government. The first part of the defence was better than the second, and the judge acknowledged the hardship of the case—the responsible irresponsibility of the editor—in his summing up, but directed the jury that, although not morally, he was legally guilty; and that,

* Sir Richard Phillips' "Public Characters."

having accepted the responsibility, he must endure the punishment. The three defendants were found guilty February 11th, 1811, and each sentenced to a year's imprisonment, Roche in the King's Bench prison, and the printer and publisher in Newgate. Great efforts were made to obtain a remission, or, at all events, a mitigation of the sentence in the case of Roche, but the most his friends could procure for him was a relaxation of the prison rules. Roche has left a character behind him for honour, probity, and feeling perhaps unsurpassed in the annals of the newspaper press: whilst the records of his past life present the too often repeated features of unrequited talents, merit unequally rewarded, and a life of hard drudgery, worn away in a continuous inglorious struggle against poverty. The only particulars which we now possess of this amiable man's life are preserved in a brief memoir prefixed to a small volume of poems published by subscription for the benefit of his family in 1830, shortly after his decease.* From this, it would appear that he came of an Irish family, which had beggared itself by its faithful adherence to the cause of Charles the First, and that he was born in Paris, on the 23d of February, 1786; but a surviving friend doubts the correctness of this statement, and informs us, that he believes Roche was born in Dublin, in 1780, and carried over to France by his parents before he was two years old. Be this as it may, he received his education at the Ecole Militaire, where his father, an accomplished gentleman, was professor of modern languages; but when he had attained the age of eighteen, the old gentleman appears to have grown nervous and fidgety lest his son might be drawn for the conscription, and sent him to London in the suite of the Russian ambassador. Roche, seeing no very bright prospects of advancement before him, carried some letters of introduc-

* "London in a Thousand Years, and other Poems," by Eugenius Roche.

tion with which he had been furnished, to Mr. Hoare, the banker of Fleet-street, who, with a ready liberality which sheds a lustre on his name, invited Roche to his house at Mitcham Grove—not on a mere complimentary visit of a few days, but for a stay which extended over two years; during which the young author employed himself in writing for the magazines. In 1807, he originated the "Literary Recreations," a monthly periodical in which Byron, Campbell, and Allan Cunningham published some fugitive pieces. His first connexion with the *Day* was in 1809, in the capacity of a parliamentary reporter, but on the paper changing its line of politics, he succeeded to the editorship. He was also proprietor of a weekly paper, the *National Register*, which yielded him a fair profit; and so far all seemed going on well. On obtaining the editorship of the *Day*, he had considered himself justified by his means in taking to himself a wife, and had married a Miss Oliver. Eugenius Roche had a heart in which all the domestic virtues flourished; with a home of taste such as he was likely to form, sufficient means, a fond wife, and children growing round him, who so happy as he? But there was the unseen rock on which the happy home was to split to pieces, and the poor fond adventurer on the ocean of life to be dashed from the arms of wife and children, only to see his precious treasures exposed to the buffeting of the waves, drifting into a sea of uncertainty and peril. The judgment which we have already alluded to,—that he be imprisoned for twelve months, and give security himself in five hundred pounds, and two sureties in two hundred and fifty pounds each, for his good behaviour for three years,—brought down upon him without his having himself done a single act to provoke or to deserve it, consigned him to the King's Bench, or, as we are elsewhere informed, the Marshalsea. His paper, the *National Register*, deprived of his personal supervision, fell off in its circulation, and,

fearing lest it might become valueless, he prudently sold it, but imprudently took in payment from Regnier, who bought it of him, two bills for four and five hundred pounds respectively, which he paid away to his stationer. At maturity these bills were dishonoured: but honest Roche made arrangements for paying the amount with interest. This crippled him for years; his health, never robust, was suffering from confinement, and he came out of prison only to experience the bitterness of disappointment, and to suffer the neglect of those for whom he had borne punishment and loss. Abandoned by the committee of the *Day*, he in August, 1813, got a berth on the *Morning Post;* and subsequently became one of its editors. To this paper, he writes to his friend the Reverend Mr. Shuttleworth, he gave up "every hour of his time, and almost every thought of his mind." His disengaged thoughts, we may be sure, were concentrated on those children whom he loved so well, and for whom he was struggling so hard; but misfortune had claimed him; he was to be acquainted with nothing but trouble and disappointment. He had an accepted play at Drury Lane when the theatre was burned down. In 1827, his wife died, leaving him, a man as unversed in the ways of the world, as inexperienced and as unsuspicious as his own children, to carry on the struggle alone for a family of eight. A glimmer of hope dawned even through his darkened house, for he was at the same time made editor of the *New Times*, a paper which afterwards became the *Morning Journal*, but had sprung out of the *Day*. So that, curiously enough, he came to be connected with the paper again after a lapse of nearly twenty years. But this connexion only led him on a few steps nearer to ruin. The editorship was offered to him on condition of his taking two twenty-fourth shares in the paper, which, knowing the other proprietors to be very wealthy men, he did not hesitate about doing, and mortgaged a

freehold house of which he was possessed to buy them. In 1828, and on being made editor of the paper, he thought he could prudently marry again: but again he was disappointed. The *New Times* was a losing concern, and he was called upon as a shareholder to pay more for his proportion of the losses than he received in salary as its editor. He represented to his rich co-proprietors, that however well they were enabled to stand this state of things, it would end in ruin to him, and, after a long demur, they at length agreed to let him off, and offered him the editorship of the *Courier* on his agreeing to take a twenty-fourth share, which a proprietor, liberally disposed, would let him have for five thousand guineas. But his embarrassments increased upon him — his health failed — his constant anxiety for his beloved children, and his hard work for them, were breaking him up. Finally, he became bound for a friend, who afterwards absconded, and left poor confiding generous Roche to pay for him. The prospect of the impending and certain ruin of his family was too much for him, and his stout heart, which had been so sorely tried, broke at last. He died in Hart-street, Bloomsbury, November 9th, 1829, and a contemporary which had wrestled with him in the arena of politics, honestly declared that "during the lapse of more than twenty years that he was connected with the journals of London, he never gained an enemy nor lost a friend." Such was the exemplary newspaper editor—at once the most deserving and the least fortunate of men: "as worthy a man as ever lived," as another contemporary journalist of whom we have sought information, writes, or as Mr. Payne Collier has been good enough to describe him to us, "a most amiable and gentlemanlike companion." One of Roche's sons, who was called to the bar some ten years ago, was also in early life engaged upon the *Morning Post.*

Among Roche's companions on the *Day*, were Allan

Cunningham, and an author of passing note, Joseph Davey, who was a great friend of Cunningham's; and on the staff of reporters was Charles Phillips, afterwards the eminent counsel, the advocate of Courvoisier, and the Insolvency Commissioner. John Scott succeeded Roche as editor of the *Day;* and to him succeeded Hogan, an Irishman, who died Judge of Sierra Leone.

Cunningham also wrote for the *Star*, and other papers, adopting in many instances the pseudonym of "Hid-Allan." Scott, after leaving the *Day*, subsequently edited the *Champion;* and still later, and for some time, the *Morning Advertiser*.

The editor of the *Star* at this time was John Mayne, a native of Dumfries, and the author of a beautiful little poem called "The Siller Gun," on whose writings, perhaps, Burns modelled his own style. He was educated at the University of Dumfries, under Dr. Chapman, but left it at an early age, and was put to the trade of a printer, in which capacity he worked upon the *Dumfries Journal*, a weekly paper, then edited by Professor Jackson. His father leaving for Glasgow with his family, our young printer accompanied them, and in that city produced his first published poem, "Hallow E'en," from which Burns afterwards took the idea for his own poem of the same name. In 1777, he wrote the "Siller Gun," and, in 1803, "Glasgow, a Poem," as well as some ballads and political pieces; and, at this period, he was a frequent contributor to "Ruddiman's Magazine." He was passing through a regular service in the house of Messrs. Foules of Glasgow, so that his success with the Muses, and the fame and consideration which it brought him, had not intoxicated him, or diverted him from the path which he had chosen. When his term was completed, he left for London, and we soon find him printer, editor, and part proprietor of the *Star*, as well as a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

John Mayne lived to a green old age, and died in Lisson Grove South, on the 14th of March, 1836, retaining a lively recollection of the *dramatis personæ* of that important stage on which he had been an acter of no mean consequence.*

* Annual Biography and Obituary, vol. xxi. (1837) pp. 241-4.

CHAPTER IV.

SIR VICARY GIBBS, COBBETT, AND THE HUNTS—EX-OFFICIO INFORMATIONS—"IN TERROREM"—TRIALS OF THE "POLITICAL REGISTER" AND THE "EXAMINER"—BROUGHAM ON THE CONDITION OF THE PRESS—THE FRENCH BOGEY AGAIN—TRIAL OF THE "STAMFORD NEWS"—JUDGE AND JURY TO MATCH—LORD FOLKESTONE TELLS SOME AWKWARD TRUTHS—SAVAGE'S "ACCOUNT OF THE LONDON DAILY PAPERS"—STUART AND PERCIVAL—PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE "COURIER"—SOMETHING LIKE EXTORTION—STREET OF THE "COURIER"—WILLIAM HAZLITT—JOHN, AFTERWARDS LORD CAMPBELL—DR. STODDART—DAVID RICARDO—GOLDSMITH, THE SPY—JEKYLL—PETER FINNERTY—JOHN DYER COLLIER AND HIS SON JOHN PAYNE COLLIER—CYRUS REDDING—SAMUEL AND COMPTON—DR. MACLEAN AND DAVID WALKER—FITZGERALD AND JENKINS!—A BATCH OF PRESSMEN OF 1812—ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO EJECT THE REPORTERS—BROUGHAM OUT OF ORDER—THE "DAY" COMPLAINED OF—LOVELL, OF THE "STATESMAN," TRIED—"MARTYRDOM" OF THE HUNTS—LIBEL ON THE PRINCE REGENT—LEIGH HUNT'S PRISON-GARDEN—STOTT IN THE CHARACTER OF "HAFIZ"—DEATH OF JOHN WALTER, THE ELDER—DR. STODDART AND THE "NEW TIMES"—DR. CROLY—DR. MAGUIRE—SAMUEL CARTER HALL.

ANOTHER bone of contention was found in the political world to raise the indignation of editors and the vigilance of Sir Vicary Gibbs, and to give to the powers an excuse and an opportunity for coming down with vengeance upon Cobbett and the Hunts. Some sons and servants of farmers in the Isle of Ely, who had joined the militia, had been severely flogged for some slight act of insubordination, and the punishment was inflicted under a guard of the German Legion, then serving in Great Britain. This exasperated the feelings of the people, and the national irritation naturally found a tongue in the newspapers. Some severe strictures first appeared in the *Stamford News*, and were thence copied by Cobbett into his *Register*, and by the Hunts into their *Examiner*. Sir Vicary Gibbs,

ever ready to hurl the thunderbolt of an *ex-officio* information at the heads of editors, printers, or publishers—to whom the liberty of the press was a nightmare—flew to his usual artillery, and opened fire upon all three papers. The use which Sir Vicary Gibbs generally made of this power of issuing *ex-officio* informations (which was very free), was to lay an information against the offending writers, but not to proceed to trial; exacting a promise from them, that, if he did not pursue it, they would write nothing offensive to the Government, and thus holding it *in terrorem* over their heads; but in this case he was determined to press onward to conviction; and he began with Cobbett. The first of the trials came on before Lord Ellenborough, in the Court of King's Bench, Westminster, on the 9th of July, 1810, when William Cobbett, Thomas Curzon Hansard, printer, Budd, a vendor, and Bagshaw, a bookseller, were tried for the writing and publishing of the article in the *Political Register*. The unusual course was taken of serving a subpœna on Hansard, himself included in the information, to prove the authorship upon Cobbett; but as the latter, who defended himself, at once avowed it, this irregular evidence was not made use of. All the defendants were found guilty, and Cobbett was sentenced to pay a fine of a thousand pounds, to be imprisoned in Newgate for the term of two years, and to find securities for his good behaviour for seven years from the expiration of his imprisonment, himself in three thousand pounds, and two sureties in one thousand pounds each; Hansard to be imprisoned for three months in the King's Bench, and to find securities for two years; and Bagshaw and Budd to two months' imprisonment, and to find securities.

The trial of the Hunts came next, and on the 27th of February, 1811, John Hunt and James Henry Leigh Hunt were indicted before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury. Brougham, then rising into notice, defended them, and drew a picture of the state of the press which, although

no doubt highly coloured, to have an effect upon the jury by increasing the contrast between wild licentiousness and wholesome argument, we fear was correct in the outline. We have been all along studious to avoid stepping into the wide field of the liberty of printing, remembering that "the press" is a term of extensive signification, and that our business is but with one branch of it; but the remarks of Brougham were so obviously applied to the newspaper press of the time, and to that only, that we feel bound to quote them *in extenso:*—"The licentiousness of the press," began the advocate of the press, "has reached to a height which it certainly never attained in any other country, nor even in this at any former period. That licentiousness has indeed of late years appeared to despise all the bounds which had once been prescribed to the attacks on private character, insomuch that there is not only no personage so important or exalted—for of that I do not complain—but no person so humble, harmless, and retired, as to escape the defamation which is daily and hourly poured forth by the venal crew, to gratify the idle curiosity, or still less excusable malignity, of the public; to mark out for the indulgence of that propensity individuals retiring into the privacy of domestic life—to hunt them down, and drag them forth as a laughing-stock to the vulgar, has become in our days, with some men, the road even to popularity, but with multitudes the means of earning a base subsistence." An advocate for the press, and a man acquiring popularity, would scarcely have got up in a court of justice and made this assertion, if there had not been very good grounds for it, and we fear we must accept it as a perhaps slightly exaggerated statement of the facts. He urged upon the jury the reprehensible severity which had been exercised towards the militiamen (one of whom had been sentenced to receive two thousand five hundred lashes), and the right, and even the duty of the newspapers to comment upon it. Lord Ellenborough summed up, artfully trying to act upon the

fears which were current of the intentions of Bonaparte, and dwelling upon the danger of making the military dissatisfied with their condition at such a time, and wound up by declaring, "I have no doubt that this libel has been published with the intention imputed to it." The jury, however, differed from his lordship, and returned a verdict of Not Guilty.*

The prosecution of the *Stamford News*, in which the "seditious libel" had first appeared, properly belongs to the history of the provincial press, and would be kept back for the view which we shall have shortly to take of its progress, but that it is the concluding act of the drama, and presents some curious contrasts and anomalies which require it to be placed near what has gone before. The scene is changed to Lincoln, and people are curious to see what a country jury, composed of that very class which has been outraged by the acts denounced by the papers, will do for the men who have stood out boldly and promptly for the rights and immunities of British yeomen. Sir G. Wood, one of the barons of the Exchequer, is the presiding judge, and Mr. Clarke, in the absence of the Attorney-General, is counsel for the Crown. The jury is special, and the trial opens on the 13th of March, 1811. The publication is duly proved, and Brougham again rises for the defence, reiterating the arguments he had employed at Westminster a few weeks before. When he sits down, a shout of applause rings through the court. This incident is adroitly turned to account by Clarke, to show what an evil tendency the libel has had, and how it has excited the feelings of the people. The insolent tone in which he pretends to describe the proceedings and motives of the newspaper writers would appear incredible, did we not bear in mind that he is addressing a country jury whom he hopes to stultify and frighten into a conviction:—"It is the ground of complaint with this kind of people," he

* Howell's "State Trials," vol. xxxi. pp. 367-414.

says of the editors, "'I cannot get my living without libelling, and it is hard if I cannot do as I please.'" One would suppose that the article for which the writer was on his trial, was some personal attack upon individuals; but the "libel" was only a protest against a system, and no one name was mentioned, except the names of the men who had suffered the punishment. He closes his address by the following exaggerated statement of the case, which any judge of recent times would have instructed the jury to dismiss from their minds instantly:—"It is for you, gentlemen, now to say by your verdict whether we are to have a country and a soldiery to defend it—whether they are to fight for us and to love us, or whether they are to go over and join our mortal enemy." But the judge was rather disposed to make the picture still more terrible to the rustic eyes which it was intended to horrify, and seeks to secure a conviction by the aid of a little more clap-trap and fustian:—"We are engaged at this time with the most formidable foe of this country. Everybody knows he is aiming at the downfall of the country, not only by open warfare, but also by means that operate in the very bosom of the country. It is the opinion of many that the British press is one of the agents he uses in order to effect his purposes. It is to be feared there are in this country men who are endeavouring to aid and assist him in his projects, by crying down the establishments of the country, and breeding hatred against the Government." This unfair insinuation was as cowardly as it was cruel, for he admits, "Whether that s the source from which the paper in question springs, *I cannot say;* but I advise you to consider whether it has not that tendency."

With such a charge ringing in their ears, which brought Bonaparte into their homesteads, and French wolves into their folds—with such a dismal picture held up before their eyes of a disaffected soldiery, and an army in revolt, what course could a poor benighted jury of farmers pursue?

Could the agricultural mind stand up against "his lordship's," stored with such lots of learning; or would the squire, who happened to be on the jury, and loved his wine and the chase, and cared not to see a paper from year to year, but damned all writing and reading as a bore and mere schoolgirls' occupation, array himself as a champion against the judge with whom he hoped to crack a bottle? Nay, might there not be a glimmering upon the rustic understanding, when mail coaches were few and railways were not, that maybe they might get into some suspicion of being sympathisers with the seditious libeller, disaffected personage, and traitor by insinuation, who was standing at the bar? Some of these things guided the Lincoln jury, and they stumbled into a verdict of Guilty. So, as Brougham sarcastically remarked as he turned upon his heel, "What is a crime at Lincoln is not a crime at Westminster."*

These trials brought the attention of the House of Commons to the subject of *ex-officio* informations in general, and their application to newspaper libels in particular; and several motions were made on the subject; but nothing came of them, with the exception of the disclosures made in the course of a debate on Lord Folkestone's motion for a return of all persons prosecuted on *ex-officio* "informations for libel," which came before the House on the 28th of March, 1811. His lordship boldly accuses the Attorney-General of the grossest partiality in the selection of the newspapers for prosecution; he instances the *Morning Post*, which can write anything with impunity, whilst the proprietor of the opposition *Statesman* is in Newgate for publishing a paragraph copied from a Manchester paper, which paper itself was not prosecuted. He also points out the anomaly of the Hunts being acquitted, and Drakard convicted—whilst the *Courier* goes any length unpunished. He asserts that in the year 1788,

* Howell's "State Trials," vol. xxxi.

libels against two of the Royal Dukes, who then opposed Ministers, were actually sent to the newspapers from the Treasury, and the publishers afterwards punished for inserting them! He puts the case most likely correctly when he says:—"Upon the whole, sir, it appears that the real rule which guides these prosecutions is this: that the *Courier* and the other papers which support the Ministry of the day, may say whatever they please, without the fear of prosecution; whereas the *Examiner*, the *Independent Whig*, the *Statesman*, and papers that take the contrary line, are sure to be prosecuted for any expression that may be offensive to the Minister."*

But the motion is rejected, as are several others of the same tendency, and poor Drakard still pines in Lincoln gaol. A moan from him is heard in the House of Commons, when Lord Folkestone presents to it, on the 18th of June, a petition in which the prisoner calls attention to his case, and prays for redress; but a deaf ear is turned to him, and his good friend's motion for the production of the papers relating to his case, is negatived.

In the year 1811, a small volume on the condition of the daily press made its appearance from the pen of the librarian of the London Institution. It is of little or no value now,—and, for the matter of that, was of scarcely more when written; but on glancing over it, we are struck with the large number of daily evening papers then in existence. There were the commercial travellers' paper, the *Traveller;* the booksellers', the *Globe;* the *Courier, Sun, Statesman, Pilot,* and *Alfred.* Among the morning papers were three belonging to trades—the *Morning Advertiser,* to the licensed victuallers; the *Day,* to the auctioneers; and the *British Press,* to the booksellers.†

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xix. pp. 568-9.

† "An account of the London Daily Papers, and the manner in which they are conducted, &c." By James Savage, Librarian of the London Institution. 1811.

We have a better insight than this book affords us into the mysteries of the newspaper world, and may pick out of Daniel Stuart's letters vindicating himself against the accusations of Coleridge, some curious anecdotes illustrating the relations between the Government and their organs of the press during the administration of Percival: —"Upon another occasion, I forget what, Coleridge exposed in conversation some improper part in the Duke of York's conduct. I wrote an article or essay on the subject in the *Courier*. Two or three papers were allowed to go off every day early to the Government offices. About four o'clock up came an alarming message from the Treasury, that, if that paragraph went forth the Ministry would be ruined. We cancelled three thousand five hundred sheets, and expunged it, and I made Street (his partner) promise to accept of no pecuniary reward for so considerable a loss, that it might not be said we had done this to extort money."

The next story displays some cunning huckstering on the part of Street, which would have been worthy of his partner, the canny Scot himself:—"At this time a struggle was going on whether the Regent should be a Whig or a Tory, and important letters were passing between his Royal Highness and Mr. Percival. At midnight, George Spurrett, the porter, who slept in the *Courier* office, was knocked up: a splendid carriage and splendid liveries at the door; a portly elegant man, elegantly dressed, wrapped up in a cloak, presented himself, and inquired for Mr. Stuart (for, as I was abused in the papers as the conductor of the *Courier*, the merit of which wholly belonged to Mr. Street, I was the person inquired for by strangers). George said Mr. Stuart lived out of town, but Mr. Street, the editor, resided on the Adelphi-terrace. A packet was delivered to George, and he was enjoined to give it speedily to Mr. Street, as it was of great importance. This was *a copy of the correspondence between the Prince of Wales and*

Mr. Percival. To be sure of its being genuine (?) Mr. Street went immediately to Mr. Percival to inquire. On seeing it, Mr. Percival started back, and exclaimed, 'This is done to ruin me with the Prince! If it appears in the *Courier*, nothing will persuade him I did not publish it as an appeal to the public against him. It must not be published!' 'No!' said Mr. Street; '*it is a very good article for the paper.*' Mr. Percival explained and entreated, Mr. Street still remarking, '*It is a very good article for the paper, and what will partner Stuart say if he hears of my suppressing it?*' 'Well,' said Mr. Percival, who held it fast, 'some news shall be sent to you as an equivalent.' Accordingly, a copy of the official despatch of the taking of the island of Bandy in the East Indies, was published in the *Courier*, before it appeared in the *London Gazette.*" *

Street, the editor and part proprietor of the *Courier*, is incidentally alluded to in terms which would lead us to infer (as, indeed, Stuart always would when speaking of anybody) that he had not the tact of his partner, and that the latter, after vain attempts to guide him, left him to manage the paper in his own way. It was Stuart's policy to give an independent support to Government, but "this required delicate handling," and Street not being capable of steering the paper along a middle course, it gradually became a mere ministerial journal—the instrument of the Treasury—"Street making it acquire the reputation of being even half official." "The paper acquired a high character for being the organ of the Government, and obtained a great circulation, but it became odious to the mob."†

Besides the names we have mentioned in connexion with the *Day*, there were others which have since become illustrious, enrolled upon the staffs of the daily papers:—Coleridge was drudging for Stuart on the *Courier*; Hazlitt,

* Gentleman's Magazine for July, 1838, p. 128.

† Ibid. for June, 1838, p. 588.

the son of a dissenting sire, had just laid down his artist's brush to write for the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle*, to the latter of which papers he was, three years afterwards, appointed theatrical critic, succeeding the present Lord Campbell, who had filled the post; and at last wedding the sister of the *Times*' editor, Dr. Stoddart. It is believed that Jeremy Bentham about this time wrote articles on political economy for the papers, and it is certain that a writer, only second to him on the subject, was expounding the principles of finance in the *Morning Chronicle*. This was David Ricardo, the son of a Jew stockbroker, who was born in London on the 19th of April, 1772, but adopting the Christian faith, was abjured by his father and turned adrift upon the world. His genius, having the Hebrew bend, engaged itself in financial abstractions, and, on the 6th of September, 1810, the attention of the commercial world was attracted to the first of a series of letters on the Depreciation of the Currency, which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*. The articles brought him prominently into view as a political economist, and, in 1819, he entered parliament. He died, September 11th, 1823, at his seat, Gatcomb Park, near Gloucester. His contributions to the *Chronicle* have been reprinted in a separate form.*

Another of the children of Israel, who disgraced the press by his connexion with it as much as Ricardo did it credit, was Lewis Goldsmith, whose first exploit was to compile a violent work on the State of France, which he could get nobody to publish. He then went to Paris and turned his slanderous pen against England, engaging himself on Sampson Perry's *Argus*, which was then being published in Paris; but he soon quarrelled with his employers and was discharged, and then got employment as translator in the French Courts of Justice. In 1809 he returned

* Georgian Era, vol. iv. p. 43.

to England, abusing everything French, and sold his mercenary pen to Government, betraying the secrets of his late employers in the *Anti-Gallican*, which afterwards changed its name to the *British Monitor*.*

The *Morning Chronicle* and the *Statesman* were occasionally indebted to the pen of Jekyll, the active member of Opposition, for an article. This gentleman was descended from Sir Joseph Jekyll (whose Christian name he inherited), the Master of the Rolls to George I. He was educated at Westminster, and afterwards at Oxford, and was subsequently called to the bar. In 1767, the Marquis of Lansdowne gave him a seat for Calne, and he always raised his voice whilst in the House of Commons in defence of the press. His opposition to ministers gained him the appointment of Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales, and he was made a Master in Chancery.† It was also about this time that Mr. Robert (afterwards Serjeant) Spankie, the first M.P. that Finsbury had, and Attorney-General of Bengal, assisted Perry in the editorship.

Among the reporters of Perry's staff, on the *Morning Chronicle*, was Peter Finnerty, the son of a tradesman at Loughrea, Galway, who was brought up in Dublin as a printer, and, in the revolutionary year of 1798, succeeded to Arthur O'Connor as printer of the revolutionary organ, the *Press*. But this being a rather dangerous occupation, he left it and came to England, where he soon began reporting the debates for the *Chronicle*. Having an acquaintance with Sir Home Popham, he sailed with the Walcheren Expedition, with a view to reporting its achievements, and was thus, to some extent, the predecessor of the Russells and Special Correspondents of our own day; but his designs were forbidden, and he was set on shore again. The year whose history we are writing saw Finnerty in Lincoln Gaol, to which he was committed,

* Sir Richard Phillips' "Public Characters." † Ibid.

in February, 1811, for eighteen months, having also to find securities for five years' good behaviour, himself in five hundred pounds, and two sureties in two hundred pounds each, for a libel on Lord Castlereagh, on a judgment by default in the Court of King's Bench. He memorialised the House of Commons on June the 21st against the treatment he experienced in gaol, accusing the gaolers of cruelty and placing him with felons, refusing him air and exercise; and there were several discussions on the subject, in which he was highly spoken of by Whitbread, Burdett, Sir S. Romilly, and Brougham.* He died in Westminster, May 11th, 1822, aged fifty-six.

Under the master-mind of the second John Walter, who was guiding the destinies of the *Times*, the Shaksperian scholar, John Payne Collier, was one of the band who were storming the town with that broadsheet for their standard. His father, Mr. John Dyer Collier (a son of Dr. John Collier, the author of several Scriptural works, and by some means related to Jeremy Collier, the denouncer of the stage in 1698), had been connected with the *Times* from 1806 or 1807. Originally designed for the bar, the elder Collier had early in life written a "Treatise on the Law of Patents;" but, in 1789, he seems to have deserted the law and was following the occupation of a Spanish merchant. We soon afterwards hear of him as having two farms, and are not surprised to hear that he lost money by them both. The family had originally come from Witney in Oxfordshire, but the study of the law and the pursuit of commerce had unfitted Mr. Collier, no doubt, to return to farming avocations, and in them he much crippled his means; and in 1806 or 1807, was one of the staff of the *Times*, having about 1802 edited a "Monthly Register." His son, Mr. John Payne Collier, the learned expounder of the text of Shakspeare, was

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xx. 1811, pp. 723-43.

born in the year 1789, and was called to the bar in 1829 or 1830, but he never practised. During this long interval, and from about the period at which our history has arrived, he was employed as parliamentary reporter upon the *Times*, and subsequently upon the *Morning Chronicle*; and some strictures which he had written upon the bar seem to have stood in the way of success in his profession, about which, in truth, we believe he was in a position to be indifferent. Mr. Collier's first work was the Poetical Decameron, published in 1820, and he has since produced many others on bibliography and criticism.

Cyrus Redding, the veteran whose name we meet with in turning over old magazines at the very beginning of the century, and who has written upon so wide a range of subjects, from the history of empires to the history of wines—who is equally at home in tales of shipwreck, in novels, and in poems—who was at one time editing *Galignani's Messenger* in Paris, and, at another, helping to get Campbell through the editing of the *New Monthly Magazine* in London, was a desultory reporter upon the *Pilot* about this time. The *Pilot* was an evening paper which had been established in 1807 by E. Samuel, the founder of the *Madras Gazette*, who had been auditor to the Nabob of Oude, and who was commissioned to England for the purpose of vindicating the Nabob's cause. Hence this paper came to be looked upon as an authority on Indian affairs, and a strong opponent of the Company: a character which it still maintained under Mr. Herbert Compton, who succeeded Samuel, after his appointment to the chief justiceship of Demerara, in the editorship, and had David Walker, a son of the rector of Middleton, near Manchester, for sub-editor, and a zealous assistant in Dr. Maclean, the anti-contagionist, who had also been in India and come home in no very good humour. He had been surgeon-assistant to the East India Company in

Bengal, where he started a newspaper, but the Marquis of Wellesley, then Governor-General, not approving of the course it took, suppressed it and shipped off the editor to England, under the peremptory laws which then governed the press of India. He wrote many works on politics and medicine; and, after a long battle with poverty, he overcame it by forming an alliance with a rich lady, and returned into the service of the Company as reader of lectures to young surgeons going out in its employ. On Compton's returning to India, as Sir Herbert and Chief Justice of Bombay, the editorship of the *Pilot* fell into the hands of Fitzgerald, a reporter on the *Morning Post*, who, bringing with him the favour of the Duke of York, was enabled to add to the attractions of the paper exclusive intelligence from the Horse Guards. He died Chief Justice of Sierra Leone. The *Pilot* had had on its staff, in 1808, William Jerdan, afterwards editor of the *Literary Gazette*, Henry Ireland, and one Jenkins, a reporter of some eminence in his day; and it was about this time that Mr. Redding left it, to manage a newspaper at Plymouth.* Mr. Redding, in after years, wrote for the *Examiner*, and also for the *Times*.

Thomas Barnes, afterwards the famous editor of the *Times*, was, in 1812, writing a series of political characters for the *Examiner*, and of critical essays, under the signature of "Strada," for the *Champion;* Tilloch editing the evening *Star*, well supported by Mayne and Turnbull; Byrne guiding the destinies of the *Morning Post*, with (Dr.) Fleming, Fitzgerald (afterwards editor of the *Pilot*), Hogan (afterwards editor of the *Day*), Donovan, Jerdan, and Walter Henry Watts (who wrote the "Annual Biography and Obituary" from 1817 to 1831), in the reporters' gallery; Edward Quin, a great City luminary, now living in the rules of the King's Bench, and editing

* Redding's "Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal," and private information kindly furnished by Mr. Redding.

the *Traveller;* John Taylor, the punster, and author of the farce of "Monsieur Tonson," great upon the *Sun*, assisted by a facetious lawyer, named Fladgate; and Jerdan, one of the reporters of the *British Press*, among whom he remained, he tells us, for three years. But the queerest character on the newspaper stage of that day—and there were some very queer ones too—was Proby, the reporter for the *Chronicle*. His prejudices and eccentricities were innumerable. He had never been out of London, in a boat, or on the back of a horse in his life; to the end of bag wigs, he wore a bag; and was the last man in London to walk with a cane as long as himself, which he afterwards exchanged for an umbrella, his constant companion, whether the sun shone or the rain fell. He was always in a perspiration (which earned him the name of "King Porus," from George Colman), and always punctual to the second in his appointments, although he never set his watch. His appetite for pastry was inordinate, and he once or twice ruined himself by it, and had to be bailed out of prison for a pastrycook's bill. He reported the Parliamentary debates entirely from memory, and without making a single note. At last the poor, silly, clever fellow fell into dire distress, and became an inmate of Lambeth workhouse, in the grey clothes of which he used occasionally to come out and call upon his friends.*

Such were a few of the newspaper worthies of 1812. But the weight of talent still rested with the *Morning Chronicle*, whose editor had counted Fox and Sheridan among his personal and most active friends, and who still numbered all the young and rising geniuses of the day among his contributors.

The precarious tenure of the reporters' position in the gallery, and the ludicrous etiquette of ignoring their existence there, are amusingly illustrated in the remarks of

* Autobiography of William Jerdan, vol. i.

Mr. Brougham which followed a complaint of breach of privilege against the *Day*. On the 17th of June, 1812, Mr. Marryatt rose to complain that in a report of parliamentary proceedings which had appeared in that paper, some severe reflections, which Brougham had thought it necessary to make upon the conduct of a witness at the bar of the House, had been so given as to have the appearance of applying to him, Mr. Marryatt, and he therefore moved that Thomas Knowles, the printer of the *Day*, attend at the bar of the House. Brougham acknowledged the inaccuracy of the report, but whilst repudiating any intention of reflecting upon Mr. Marryatt, suggested a lenient treatment of such cases; for, he continues, treading close upon the forbidden ground, "Gentlemen should consider the disadvantages under which reports of their debates were taken." Loud cries of "Order! order!" reminded him that he was touching the tabooed subject, and he goes on more cautiously: "He would not press this, but begged gentlemen to reflect on all these circumstances of palliation which they could not be ignorant of, *though it was unparliamentary to mention them.*" Marryatt was now anxious to withdraw his motion, but the House was in the humour to immolate a printer, and the Speaker being appealed to, refused permission for its withdrawal, and the House went to a division, which only let off the printer by a majority of 116 to 110.*

Lord Folkestone's assertion of partiality being evinced by the Attorney-General in his selection of papers for prosecution, is further borne out by the untiring severity with which the Opposition papers, especially the *Statesman* and the *Examiner*, were still being followed up. In August, 1812, Daniel Lovell, the proprietor of the former of those papers, and who in the previous year had been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for copying the remarks of the *Day*

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xxxiii. p. 550.

on the conduct of the military at Burdett's arrest, was again tried and found guilty of a libel on the Commissioners of the Transport Service; and although he pleaded that it was published without his knowledge or sanction, whilst he was in prison, he was sentenced to pay a fine of five hundred pounds, to be imprisoned in Newgate for eighteen months, and to find securities for three years, himself in a thousand pounds and two sureties in five hundred pounds each. The vindictiveness with which this man was pursued could not be matter of doubt. The previous libel for which he was suffering imprisonment, had been copied from the Manchester papers; but whilst they, the original promulgators, were let off with an expression of sorrow at their inadvertence, Lovell's apology for merely copying from them was rejected, and his prosecution proceeded with. The poor fellow was totally ruined by this persecution. The fine was more than it was in his power to raise; and he lay in gaol without hope of ever complying with the severe requirements of the law. At last, on November 23d, 1814, Whitbread, that good and steady friend of the press, presented a petition from him praying for a remission or reduction of his fine, and, after some time, the Government remitted the fine, and reduced the amount of security; but he was still unable to procure it, and on the 17th of March, 1815, Whitbread again presented a petition from him, stating his utter inability to procure the required security, and calling the merciful consideration of the House to his piteous plight, he having been confined nearly four years in gaol, and suffering so in mind and health, that there was every chance of his dying there; yet it was some time before he was released, and returned into the world a broken and ruined man.

The Hunts, too—John and Leigh—were again prosecuted by the Attorney-General; and, on the 9th of December, 1812, found guilty, in the Court of King's Bench, of a libel upon the Prince Regent, which had

appeared in the *Examiner*, and for which they were condemned to be each imprisoned for two years in Horsemonger-lane Gaol, and to pay a fine of five hundred pounds. The imprisonment was a triumph; they received visits from Byron, Moore, Charles Lamb, and many of the other celebrities of the day; and Leigh Hunt's description of his prison is so delightful that we are tempted to copy it:—"I papered the walls with a trellis of roses; I had the ceiling coloured with clouds and sky; the barred windows were screened with venetian blinds; and, when my bookcases were set up, with their busts and flowers, and a pianoforte made its appearance, perhaps there was not a handsomer room on that side the water. I took a pleasure, when a stranger knocked at the door, to see him come in and stare about him. . . . . But I had another surprise, which was a garden. There was a little yard outside, railed off from another belonging to a neighbouring ward. This yard I shut in with green palings, adorned it with a trellis, bordered it with a thick bed of earth from a nursery, and even contrived to have a grass plot. The earth I filled with flowers and young trees. There was an apple tree, from which we managed to get a pudding the second year. As to my flowers, they were allowed to be perfect. . . . . Here I wrote and read in fine weather, sometimes under an awning. In autumn my trellises were hung with scarlet runners, which added to the flowery investments. I used to shut my eyes in my arm-chair, and affect to think myself hundreds of miles off."* And thus he whiled away the term of his imprisonment; and in this easy, luxurious way, did penance for offending the vanity of his Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales; for it was not so much a political as a personal attack for which he was prosecuted —provoked by some fulsome remarks upon the Prince which had appeared in the *Morning Post;* penned, perhaps,

* Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, vol. ii. pp. 148-9.

by that Stott, who, under the name of "Hafiz," was inflicting the highest flown of odes upon the readers of that paper, and of whom Byron has said, "What would be the sentiments of the Persian Anacreon, Hafiz, could he rise from his splendid sepulchre at Sheeraz, where he reposes with Ferdousi and Sadi, the Oriental Homer and Catullus, and behold his name assumed by one Stott of Dromore, the most impudent and execrable of literary poachers for the daily prints?" *

John Walter, the logographic enthusiast, and founder of the *Times*, closed his career in November of this year. He had long ceased to take any active part in the management of his paper, having given a share of the profits and the whole of the control of it to his son, in 1803. He had had his fair share of Government prosecution; and, in 1806, was deprived of the privilege of printing for the Board of Customs, which he had enjoyed for eighteen years, on account of some strictures which appeared in his paper on Lord Melville's Catamaran Expedition, on which occasion also the Government advertisements were withheld; yet he fell under the suspicion of having received a pension of £700 a year from Pitt. Mr. Walter was in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

We have said that Walter gave up the control of the *Times* to his son, the second John Walter; but he was not the editor; it was he who prescribed what line of argument should be taken up, but the man who took it up was Dr. Stoddart, satirised by Moore as Dr. Slop. Stoddart was born in London, the son of a naval officer, who had a small estate in Wiltshire, contiguous, it might be, to Salisbury, for at the grammar school of that city young Stoddart was first placed, under the charge of Dr. Skinner. Here he attracted the notice of the Honourable and Reverend Shute Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, by his proficiency

* English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, *note.*

in Greek, and his Grace recommended his being sent to Christ Church. At Oxford he took the degree of B.A. in 1794, and, having a leaning to the law, followed it up with the degrees of LL.B. in 1798, and LL.D. in 1802. In 1803 he obtained the post of King's Advocate in the Admiralty Court of Malta; but in 1807 he gave it up, and returned to the scene of his earlier labours, Doctors' Commons, of which he was a civilian; marrying about the same time the daughter of Sir Henry Moncrieff, Baronet. We have already alluded to the connexion between himself and William Hazlitt, who married his sister. Whether the connexion turned his attention to newspaper literature, or whether, on the contrary, it led Hazlitt into it, we do not know; but it was about this time that Stoddart, having abjured some wild republican principles which he had possessed when young, wrote his first contribution for the *Times*, in the shape of a series of letters, under the signature of "J. S.," which appeared in 1810. In 1812 he was taken on as editor, in which capacity he continued to act for five years, when, chafing under the control of Walter, he in an evil hour joined in setting up the *New Times* in opposition. Stoddart wrote two plays, and a few other works, in addition to his political essays.*

The *New Times* did good service to literature by introducing into the ranks of public writers, Dr. Croly, who was its dramatic critic, and Mr. Samuel Carter Hall, the estimable editor of the "Art Journal," who has done such good service to the cause of art. This gentleman was born at Topsham in Devonshire, in the year 1800, and we believe his first literary employment was as parliamentary reporter on the staff of the *New Times*. Dr. Maginn also wrote for this paper, as well as (subsequently) for the *John Bull*, *Age*, *True Sun*, *Representative*, *Standard*, &c.

* Sir Richard Phillips' "Public Characters," vol. ii. p. 457.

CHAPTER V.

"GREAT NEWS! GLORIOUS NEWS! SECOND EDITION OF THE 'COURIER'"—TRIAL OF THE "INDEPENDENT WHIG" FOR A LIBEL ON THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND —THE GREAT EFFORTS OF THE "TIMES"—GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION—THE FIRST BREATH OF THE STEAM PRESS—FREDERICK KŒNIG—COMBINATION OF PRESSMEN—THE SECRET OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE "TIMES"—UNKNOWN AND UNRECORDED TALENT—THE ADVERTISEMENT DUTY RAISED—STATISTICS —ENORMOUS SALE OF COBBETT'S "REGISTER"—HAZLITT ON THE "EXAMINER"—DR. STODDART SECEDES FROM THE "TIMES"—AND SETS UP THE "NEW TIMES"—BARNES TAKES HIS PLACE ON THE "TIMES"—HIS ANTECEDENTS—A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE—THE "LITERARY GAZETTE"—INTERNAL CONVULSION OF THE "SUN"—AND ITS RUINOUS CONSEQUENCES—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS RIDING ITS HOBBY AGAIN—AND MR. COLLIER IMPRISONED— MACKINTOSH'S TESTIMONY IN FAVOUR OF THE PRESS—TWOPENNY PAMPHLETS —EVASIONS OF THE STAMP ACT—FRESH LEGISLATION TO MEET THEM— CASTLEREAGH'S SIX ACTS—DEFINITION OF THE WORD "NEWSPAPER" SETTLED BY PARLIAMENT—THE "COURIER" AND "STATESMAN" AT WAR AND LAW —"COBBETT'S EVENING POST" STARTED—ABANDONED IN DISGUST—ORDER OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH PROHIBITING A REPORT OF ITS PROCEEDINGS —THE "OBSERVER" DEFIES IT—AND IS FINED—TRIAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE —THE "JOHN BULL" SET UP—ITS ECCENTRICITIES—THEODORE HOOK, TERRY, MAGINN, HAINES BAILEY, AND BARHAM.

THE year 1813 found fifty-six newspapers circulating in London, of which eight were published every morning; seven every evening; seven every other evening; sixteen every Sunday; and eighteen on other days, weekly. This is, perhaps, the largest number of papers London ever possessed, up till the recent abolition of the stamp; and even now, it exceeds the number published every evening, and every other evening. The taste for evening news seems to have been greater than it is now; the morning papers published no third and fourth editions; the mails were often

delayed till long after the morning papers must be published; news of the successes or reverses of the war arrived irregularly, often in mid-day or late in the afternoon; and the evening papers were then of some importance. The *Courier*, especially, considered the best informed, was impatiently looked for; and the newsmen, who in those days went through the streets blowing their horns, and announcing the "great news! glorious news!" got a shilling for the "second edition of the *Courier!*"

The great questions of reform were also just coming into discussion now. Earl Grey had proclaimed in the House of Lords, two years ago, the necessity for a reform of Parliament, and had set the public thinking about it; and this speculation called forth fresh newspapers, *pro* and *con*. But the discussion of these questions seems to have produced less acrimony, and led to fewer collisions between the powers that were and the power that was to be, than many a more trifling subject. On the 18th of February, Mr. M. A. Taylor complains in the House of Commons of a misreport of one of his speeches in the *British Press* and the *Globe*, but declines making any motion on the subject; and the libel for which Henry White, the editor and proprietor of the *Independent Whig*, was tried, on the 5th of March, was as much of a personal as a political character, accusing the Duke of Cumberland of the murder of his servant Sellers. For this libel, White was sentenced to pay a fine of two hundred pounds, and suffer fifteen months' imprisonment in Newgate.

A revolution in the history of the newspaper was now approaching, which, whilst it was to add a hundredfold to its importance and influence, and immeasurably to increase its utility, was at one stroke to fix the *Times* in the position which it had recently attained as the leading journal of the world. This was the application of steam power to the printing-press, by which it would be able to throw out to the public thousands of copies in the time which it now

took to prepare hundreds, and to feed its hungry readers by tens of thousands with the news before it got cold. For this introduction the world is indebted to John Walter the second, who, we have already noticed, had assumed the management of the *Times* in 1803, and who had, in various ways, pushed it up to the place of highest mark among the daily papers. In the teeth of Government opposition, he had established expresses which furnished it with the earliest news from abroad; and the difficulties he had surmounted can only be appreciated by a perusal of his own story, which we have no reason to believe overstated: "In relation to the war of 1805, the editor's packages from abroad were always stopped by Government at the outposts, while those for the ministerial journals were allowed to pass. The foreign captains were always asked by a Government official at Gravesend if they had papers for the *Times*. These, when acknowledged, were as regularly stopped. The Gravesend officer, on being spoken to on the subject, replied that he would transmit to the editor his papers with the same punctuality as he did those belonging to the publishers of the journals just alluded to, but that he was not allowed. This led to a complaint at the Home Secretary's office, where the editor, after repeated delays, was informed by the Under-Secretary that the matter did not rest with him, but that it was even then in discussion, whether Government should throw the whole open, or reserve an exclusive channel for the favoured journals; yet was the editor informed that he might receive his foreign papers as a *favour* from Government. This, of course, implying the expectation of a corresponding favour from him in the spirit and tone of his publication, was firmly rejected; and he, in consequence, suffered for a time (by the loss or delay of important packets) for this resolution to maintain, at all hazards, his independence." *

* *Times*, February 11th, 1810.

Several similar instances are cited in which the Government endeavoured to win over the paper by promises, or to force it to their side by annoyance, but, according to the article from which we have quoted, it still held on its independent course, and boldly met and mastered all obstructions that were thrown in its way. Nor were these the only difficulties it had to encounter: the clerks of the Post-office were equally hostile to it for another reason. Formerly the news had been kept back and sold by these officials to the papers—we have seen that Cave was in this trade—and the practice was not extinct yet. Walter's expresses entirely broke up what remained of this mischievous system: and we may conclude that those letters for the *Times* which had to pass through the Post-office, were not expedited in consequence.

Having taken his measures for securing the receipt of early intelligence, Walter began to be impatient at the slowness of the process by which it was issued out to the public, and, for some time after 1804, had been in silent confederacy with an ingenious compositor named Thomas Martyn, who had been visited with an idea of the practicability of working the press without manual labour. So violent was the opposition of the pressmen to any scheme of the kind, that the experiments were all to be made in the greatest secrecy: but the enterprise came to a dead lock for want of funds; the old logographic printer, who was still the principal proprietor, coming to a resolution to advance no more money for the purpose. Still his son the manager cherished the idea, and, in the year 1814, gave an opportunity to Frederick Kœnig, a Saxon printer, and his friend Bauer, of maturing a scheme which they had in their heads. The machinery was set up in secrecy and silence: a whisper that something was going on had got among the printers, and they had not scrupled openly to declare that death to the inventor and destruction to his machine awaited any attempts to introduce mechanism

into their trade. At last all was ready for the experiment —the pressmen were ordered to await the arrival of the foreign news, when, about six o'clock in the morning, Walter entered the room, and announced to them that the *Times* was already printed—by steam! He then firmly declared that, if they attempted violence, he had sufficient force at hand to repress it: but that, if they behaved quietly, their wages should be continued to them till they got employment. The men wisely saw that resistance would only lead to their ruin, and gave in to the power of steam. On that morning, the 29th of November, 1814, the readers of the *Times* were informed that the "journal of this day presents to the public the practical result of the greatest improvement connected with printing since the discovery of the art itself. The reader of this paragraph now holds in his hand one of the many thousand impressions of the *Times* newspaper, which were taken off last night by a mechanical apparatus. A system of machinery almost organic has been devised and arranged, which, while it relieves the human frame of its most laborious efforts in printing, far exceeds all human powers in rapidity and despatch."

Having secured priority of intelligence and rapidity of printing, we may inquire by what means he ensured a supply of the literary talent without which even the other two would not have placed the *Times* in its high position, so far away from its competitors. Perhaps no paper has had fewer literary men—we mean authors or poets—on its staff than the *Times*. The men who have written for the *Times*, have *only* written for the *Times:* on that rests their fame. We cannot call up half-a-dozen names in the whole history of that journal, which are of any note in the other walks of literature; some of its most influential writers, who have in their day awakened the fears, aroused the indignation, or lulled the suspicions of the world—who have set up and bowled down cabinets—who have arrayed

kings in the asses' skins of their vivid imaginations, and set them up to be scarecrows or laughing-stocks—who have kept the Stock Exchange in a ferment, and indirectly made and ruined thousands—many of these, its ablest writers, have died, and left no sign—their very names are unknown and uninquired for; suffice it that the articles were the *Times*'—they were nobody else's to the public. Neither have its cleverest writers been of necessity attached to its staff; many were but fugitive contributors, whom Walter caught and kept till they had deposited their honey in his hive, and then let go whither they listed. Not but that his pay was always handsome—it was talent he wanted—a certain subject was before the public, and he must have the man most conversant with that subject—if the man were forthcoming, the money was sure to be. To recruit his staff, he threw his columns widely open to correspondence, and in the letters in this department he frequently discerned indications of talent which led him to inquire into particulars of the writer, and, if practicable, secure his services, at least for a time.

Having witnessed the consummation of this great enterprise and the first issue of a newspaper from a steam-worked press, the year 1814 cuts no mean figure in the history of British Journalism.

Yet another clog was put upon the newspaper next year—but what could impede its progress now? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 31st of May, 1815, proposed to raise the duty from three shillings to three shillings and sixpence for each advertisement, and to add a halfpenny to the stamp duty. The measure was feebly resisted by Sir J. Newport and Sir C. Monck in the House of Commons, and went up to the House of Lords on the 6th of July, where, although more vigorously opposed by Earl Stanhope, it also was carried without a division. The number of newspapers at this time was fifty-five in London (of which fifteen were daily), one hundred and

twenty-two in the remainder of England and Wales, twenty-six in Scotland, and forty-nine in Ireland, making a total for the United Kingdom, of two hundred and fifty-four.

Now came the peace, and the interest in the newspaper would naturally have abated but that the public had got used to it. It was no longer a luxury—it had insensibly grown into an actual necessary of life. Men had begun to feel towards it as towards a companion, and could not be parted from it; they could not live alone again and without their newspaper. We therefore do not find any very great diminution either in the number or the circulation of the papers when the stirring times were over, and the country subsided again after so long a space into peace and quiet.

Cobbett's Register, which had traded on the war, did not decrease in circulation on the advent of peace; on the contrary, it went on steadily growing, till in February, 1817, it sold fifty thousand copies per week, an enormous sale in those days.

The *Examiner* turned even more than ever to literature and essays; William Hazlitt had now joined it. As we believe there is no memoir of this graceful writer extant, it may not be out of place here to introduce some particulars of his life, as we have more than once already had occasion to mention his name in connexion with the press. He was born in Shropshire, and sent to London at an early age to be educated at the Unitarian College at Hackney. He first selected the profession of an artist, but, laying down his brush after a short trial, he became reporter of parliamentary debates for the daily papers, especially the *Morning Chronicle*, in 1809 and 1810; and afterwards undertook the theatrical criticism of that journal. He then connected himself with the *Examiner*, and subsequently with the *Atlas;* and a series of essays which he wrote for the former paper in conjunction with Leigh

Hunt was published under the title of "The Round Table," in 1817. His first work, however, was "An Essay on the Principles of Human Action," and his most pretending one "The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte." He had to encounter through the greater part of his literary career the uncompromising but unexplained animosity of "Blackwood's Magazine," which followed him with a curious consistency of hostility. He died on the 18th of September, 1830, leaving one son (we believe by his first wife, for he was twice married), who has written voluminously on legal and other subjects, and who now holds an official appointment.

The subsidence of the angry feelings engendered by the war, led to a dispute between the editor of the *Times* and his employers. Dr. Stoddart would have kept up the ultra Tory character of the paper, and was for following up Napoleon to St. Helena with the violence with which he had been accustomed to treat him; but this was overruled by Walter, who eventually hinted at a separation and a retiring allowance: but whilst the amount of pension was in consideration, Walter received an intimation from Stoddart that he required none as he was going to start the *New Times* the next week. This speculation, although bolstered up by the incorporation of the *Day*, became as we have seen a losing affair, and subsequently the ruin of poor Eugenius Roche.

Meanwhile, Walter called Barnes from the reporters' gallery to take the helm of the *Times*. This writer had been acquired by Walter's usual process—searching out a clever correspondent who had sent communications. Thomas Barnes was educated at Christ's Hospital, and was a contemporary there with Leigh Hunt, who gives some characteristic anecdotes of him in his Autobiography,* as well at that time as in after days, when an addiction to the good things of this world had swelled his proportions

* Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, vol. i. p. 179, *et alia*.

and left him few of the traces of a blue-coat boy. From Christ's Hospital he went to Cambridge, where he was the rival of Bishop Blomfield, and where he graduated. On leaving Cambridge he entered himself of the Temple, proposing to himself the bar for a profession, and set to work to study in earnest. Whilst thus occupied he indited a series of letters to the *Times* on political topics, and these being published, attracted the notice of Walter, who sought out the law student and offered him an engagement as parliamentary reporter; so that he now had him ready to fill the post left vacant by Stoddart. Next to (or perhaps even before) Walter's enterprise and liberality, Barnes' talent was the material of which the *Times*' fortune has been built.

We have hinted at poor Barnes' fondness for the good things of this life; in the earlier part of his career it sadly interrupted his literary labours, and interfered with the arrangements which he endeavoured to make for supplying contributions for the press; and in the latter part, when he had in a great measure conquered the propensity, it had impaired his health and rendered him unwieldy and uncomfortable. He suffered for years with stone, and was at length persuaded with some difficulty to submit to an operation, which, although it was most skilfully performed by Liston, gave such a shock to his nervous system that he sunk under it, and died on the 7th of May, 1841, in his fifty-sixth year, and was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery.

The same year that saw Barnes placed in the editorial chair of the *Times*, saw also an antagonist being brought out from the reporters' gallery, and elevated to the sub-editor's desk of the *Morning Chronicle*. This was John Black, who quitted his native place Dunse, in Berwickshire, for Edinburgh, in 1801, and attended the Greek classes of the University, and, about 1806, brought with him to London sufficient knowledge of the dead and modern

tongues, to enable him to get a living by his translations. Among these were a political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain, from the French of Humboldt, in four volumes; Travels through Norway and Lapland, from the German of Buch; Memoirs of Goldoni, from the French, in two volumes, &c.* In 1810, he obtained an appointment from Perry, on his reporting staff, and in 1817 was promoted to a sort of assistant editorship, becoming full editor on the death of Perry, in 1821. The change does not appear to have impaired the circulation of the paper, for, about a year after Black commenced the entire editing of it, Mr. Clement, the proprietor of the *Observer*, gave for it the large sum of forty-two thousand pounds. Black was a great friend of Mill, the historian of India, many of whose views and contributions he was supposed to have adopted and inserted—some of them rather more extreme than the *Morning Chronicle* had, under Perry's management, been in the habit of advocating.

Rejoicing in the arrival of peace, Literature and the Fine Arts also put forth their claims to be represented by a newspaper, and Mr. William Jerdan, in 1817, started the *Literary Gazette*, which in reality was the first organ of the learned classes, its predecessors being little more than catalogues or registers of new publications. Mr. Jerdan had been, as we have occasionally seen, for some time reporter to various morning papers, and editor of the *Sun* for the last few years—had just got out of one of those "quarrels of authors," which are unhappily too frequent, and, from both sides fighting with edge-tools, too bitter. Mr. Jerdan had a share in the *Sun*, but, on some of his co-proprietors selling out of it, their shares came into the hands of John Taylor, the author of "Monsieur Tonson," also a proprietor, but who aspired to a greater control than Jerdan was disposed to yield to him. This led to one of

* Dictionary of Living Authors (1817), p. 28.

those harassing cases of litigation in Chancery; those criminations and recriminations, accusations and counter-accusations, which not only end in the ruin of the two contending parties, but also of the property for which they are contending. This was nearly the case in the present instance, and the light of the *Sun* was obscured by the clouds of the impending storm. In 1815, the readers of that paper had first discerned that there was something wrong by seeing the following antagonistic notices in its columns:—

"To Correspondents.—All communications for the *Sun* newspaper must, in future, be addressed to the sole editor and part proprietor, William Jerdan. No others will be attended to."—*Sun*, September 22d, 1815.

"To Correspondents.—Mr. John Taylor, the chief and resident proprietor of the *Sun*, requests that his friends will address all communications intended for insertion to him only, at the office. Letters in general to be addressed as usual, to the editor."—*Sun*, October 15th, 1815.

Mutual friends tried to reconcile these ruinous differences, but in vain. In 1816, Jerdan got an injunction to restrain Taylor from interfering with the management of the paper; but eventually, after a compromise about his salary, was glad to get out of the concern, by selling his share for three hundred pounds. Those who are curious about the details of this dispute we refer to Mr. Jerdan's own statement, which gives them *in extenso*.*

The supply of exciting topics of the war being suddenly cut off, the fiery writing which had become habitual to some of the minor newspaper writers, bid fair to be extinguished, unless some fuel could be found for it to feed upon. Domestic topics were turned over, and reform in Parliament, and the follies and vices of the Regency, were seized upon as promising subjects. From a foreign war

* Autobiography of William Jerdan.

of sword and blood, the country soon drifted into a civil war of pen and ink. Abuse and scurrillity were bandied about between the conductors of the rival newspapers; indifference, if not disaffection spread; sedition and blasphemy were vomited forth by the press; and the moral atmosphere was contaminated. This led to measures of repression, and Cobbett, seeing the Radical publishers arraigned at the bar, made off to America in 1817, and did not return till 1819. In truth, it was time some steps were taken, not only to purge, but to protect the press; for there is nothing so perilous to liberty as licentiousness.

But, as is usual in such times, the better disposed were sometimes confounded with the evil-doers, and there were not wanting those who sought to make the excesses of twopenny unstamped journalists and seditious pamphleteers, an excuse for visiting all newspapers with the heaviest penalties for the slightest transgression. We again hear the words "reptile" and "scoundrel" applied in the House of Commons to newspaper writers. We again find complaints common of breaches of privilege—application for the Speaker's reprimand, and threats of the Serjeant-at-Arms. Mr. John Payne Collier, whom we have already mentioned as being on the reporting staff of the *Times* from about 1809, was the hero of one of these attacks, when his antagonist was no less than George Canning. On the 14th of June, 1819, the minister got up and made a complaint against the *Times* newspaper, for reporting in a speech, purporting to have been delivered by Mr. Hume, some remarks reflecting upon his humanity, which, he alleged, had never been uttered; and the next day, Bell, the printer, attending according to order, disclosed the name of Mr. Collier as the reporter from whom he had received the speech for printing. Thereupon Mr. Collier was called in and examined, and, pleading the inconvenience and difficulty of hearing accurately in the

gallery, expresses regret at the occurrence of the error, and proffers a manly apology. Mr. Mansfield, in the course of the examination, asks him the silly question, "Are you the only reporter on the *Times?*" which deserves to be recorded as an instance of the ignorance, or affectation of ignorance, displayed not unfrequently by members of the House at that time in all that concerned the press. It is also remarkable, that several members had a distinct recollection of the words complained of having been uttered by Mr. Hume, although some foolish talk about recourse being necessary to "a step which could not be named in the House," may have frightened him into eating them. Mr. Collier's appearance and demeanour at the bar created so favourable an impression, that those who had been loudest in demanding his punishment were now the most zealous in excusing him, and although Wynn, who had taken the matter up in the absence of Canning, pressed for his committal to Newgate, the House refused to subject him to this indignity, and he was consigned to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms. Sir James Mackintosh, in the course of this debate, gives a character to the press which must be understood as only applying to the class of papers which was then in question, for there is no denying the fact, that there were lower class papers that raked the kennels of slander and sedition for their food:—"He also felt himself bound to express his opinion in favour of the generally improved character of the public press; for, whatever political bias particular newspapers might have, and might exercise, respecting the several parties to which they were attached, he never recollected a period in which their columns exhibited more general decorum, more general ability, more exemplary abstinence from the attacks upon private life, and from those disgraceful invasions of the privacy of domestic character which were once so much indulged in." On the 16th Mr. Collier was discharged

on his petition, with a reprimand from the Speaker, and on payment of the fees.*

But Mr. Wynn, who had taken so active a part in the business, could not rest quiet, and on the 15th of June, with a zeal in the cause which overtopped his discretion, made a complaint against the *New Times* of some animadversions reflecting not upon himself but upon Mackintosh. That quondam reporter and distinguished man, with a becoming dignity, rose and repudiated any desire to have his name mixed up with a complaint of breach of privilege, and, after a few remarks, Mr. Wynn withdrew his motion.

The House of Commons now occupied itself in taking more practical steps for checking the latitude of the low-class papers than reprimanding every literal error and inadvertency of the high-class ones; and on the 2d of December the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to the Committee on the Stamp Duties Act (the 58th of George the Third, cap. 56), a resolution defining more clearly what papers came under the operation of the Act, limiting their size, and requiring their printers and publishers to find securities against the contingency of damages for libel. This he declared to be called for by the habitual evasion of the law by the twopenny pamphlets which, professing to give weekly *comments* on the news only, actually supplied the place of newspapers by dwelling upon every item of the week's intelligence. The resolution proposed that "all pamphlets or papers commonly so called, and all other papers containing public news or intelligence or occurrences, or any remarks or observations, address or letter thereon, or upon any matter established in Church or State, printed in any part of the United Kingdom, to be dispersed and made public, which shall not exceed two sheets, or which shall be sold or exposed to sale for a less sum than sixpence, exclusive of the duty to be charged

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xl. 1819, pp. 1138-50, 1163-77.

thereon, shall be deemed and taken to be newspapers within the meaning of the several Acts in force relating to newspapers in Great Britain and Ireland respectively, and be subject to the like duties of stamps." The bill with this addition was allowed to be read a first time on the 6th, and a second time on the 18th of December; and the discussion on its *general principle* came on at the third reading on the 20th, and on its *details* in its passing through Committee on the 21st and 22d. One ground of opposition to it was based upon the fear that the definition which subjected periodical publications under certain conditions to a stamp, might be made to include those standard works which were being brought out in a cheap form in parts; but the principal complaint was that the security it proposed was too heavy in amount, and would be a prohibition upon all but the wealthy classes from making their voices heard through the newspapers. This groundless fear, founded however upon a jealous regard for the liberties of the press, induced many leading members to oppose the bill, although few denied the necessity for interference; and, accordingly, in the minority (for the bill was carried) we find the names of Lord John Russell, Lord Stanley, Lord Althorp, Sir Francis Burdett, the Honourable J. Abercrombie, Henry Brougham, George Byng, Joseph Hume, Ralph Bernal, Daniel Whittle Harvey, David Ricardo, Alderman Waithman, and the newspapers' old friend Whitbread. In the House of Lords, where it made its appearance on the 27th of December, it met with a very feeble opposition in discussion, but Lord Erskine entered a protest against it on the Journals of the House, for the reasons already alluded to.

As a satellite in attendance upon and revolving round this bill came the Blasphemous Libel Bill, dealing with the infidelity and treason which these unstamped papers were disseminating, and subjecting the writers, on a second conviction, to be punished by "banishment." This raised,

or gave a handle to the Opposition, and the invention of a new punishment was voted against as unconstitutional by Brougham, Denman, Mackintosh, Byng, Ricardo, Hume, and others, but the bill passed.

The definition of a newspaper then adopted has ruled ever since in law, and no alteration was made in that part of the Act till the abolition of the stamp duty levelled all distinctions, and it was no longer necessary for the law to say what was or what was not a newspaper.

The press world was much agitated and the public amused about this time, by a quarrel which broke out between Stuart of the *Courier* and Lovell of the *Statesman*, who, instead of fighting it out in the columns of their respective papers, chose the more expensive arena of a court of law; and in Easter Term, 1817, the cause of Stuart *v.* Lovell came to be tried before Lord Ellenborough. The action was for a libel which had appeared in the *Statesman*, in which Stuart's paper was called "the prostituted *Courier;* the venerable apostate of tyranny and oppression, whose full-blown baseness and infamy held him fast to his present connexions, and prevented him from forming new ones;" and further accusing Stuart himself of "pocketing six or seven hundred pounds of the Society of the Friends of the People." Lord Ellenborough laid it down to the jury, that the opinions and principles of a controversial writer were open to criticism and ridicule in the same way as any other author, but that the privilege did not extend to calumnious remarks on the private character of the individual; in that respect the editor of a newspaper enjoyed the right of protection as well as any other subject,* and the jury found for the plaintiff.

Cobbett now aspired to a seat in Parliament, and with a view to the advancement of his claims set on foot a daily paper called *Cobbett's Evening Post;* but he soon found that the description of writing that was very taking with

* Starkie's Pleading, vol. ii. p. 93.

Sunday readers, and perhaps even seasonable once a week, came to be too highly flavoured for daily repetition; for Cobbett was straying further and further away from that path of energetic usefulness in which he had started, and a good deal of sound principle and common sense was buried and covered over by the rubbish, which was called by one party patriotism, and by the other treason, and was neither the one nor the other, although nearer to treason of the two. On his defeat at Coventry, he abandoned his evening paper in disgust.

The irritation among political parties still continued, and in 1820 the Cato-street conspiracy was concocted. It is only necessary to mention it, as having led to an order of the Court of King's Bench, affecting newspaper reports, which we believe to have been almost without a precedent. At the commencement of the trial of Thistlewood, on the 18th of April, Lord Chief Justice Abbott, the presiding judge, declared that "the Court strictly prohibits the publication of the proceedings until all the trials are gone through." The reason for this unusual interdiction was alleged to be the desire of the Court to secure for the prisoners an impartial trial by keeping the jurors who were to try them in succession ignorant of the evidence which had gone before. On the trial of Thomas Brunt (another of the conspirators) being called on, on the 24th of April, the Attorney-General complained that the order of the Court had been infringed by the *Observer*, in which paper the whole proceedings of Thistlewood's trial had been reported, and on the 25th he moved that Mr. Clement, the proprietor, be punished for contempt of Court. On the 28th, after sentence had been pronounced, and at the conclusion of the trials, Lord Chief Justice Abbott got up and announced that Clement had been adjudged guilty of a contempt of Court, and ordered to attend; that, had he attended, the Court would have made an order for his imprisonment, but as he had not attended, it ordered him to

pay a fine of five hundred pounds. The penalty was never enforced (in fact it appears to have been almost of a kin with "recording" sentence of death,—a mere form; probably because the Court doubted its own power of levying it, or, if not, why was not Clement's attendance enforced?) but if it had been insisted upon, Clement would have been a considerable gainer still, for there was a complete rush for copies of the *Observer*—the only paper which disobeyed the order of the Court, and gave the proceedings to the public.

The *Observer*, established in 1792, was now at the head of the Sunday press, and, together with the *News* and a few others, was honourably distinguished for its respectability, when there was so much of immorality and ribaldry published on the Sabbath.

The evil of Sunday papers has since been so broadly recognised that most of the weekly papers have long since altered their day of publication to Saturday; but at the time of which we are now writing, it was supposed to be quite out of the question, and the papers, only coming from the press late on Saturday night, gave occupation for the greater part of Sunday to the newsvendors' men and boys to circulate them. At last that hard-worked class, whom Hone had so feelingly described,* remonstrated against the system which denied them one day's rest in the seven, and in somewhat of a pharisaical tone appealed to the House of Lords in a petition, which was presented on the 20th of May, 1820, and which urged that "the increase of the Sunday papers had a direct and alarming tendency to the destruction of public morals; that their having been sold and read kept numbers of persons from attending divine service," &c. Alas! how many of those who have been relieved by the change of system attend the divine service for which they professed

* Hone's "Table Book," vol. i. pp. 61-2.

themselves so anxious? The best excuse that these men could find for carrying on a trade which appeared to them so sinful was, that "if they did not do it, others would."

The examination of witnesses for the bill of pains and penalties against the Queen was now coming on, and the newspaper press was torn with dissension. The Queen, snapping her fingers alike at the offer and the threats of the King, and claiming to be crowned, had crossed the Channel to meet the charges he brought against her. A rival Court was set up at Brandenburgh House, and to "extinguish" this Court—to heap ridicule and disgrace upon those who attended it, became the tactics of the King's party; and it occurred to Theodore Hook, and his dramatic confrère, Daniel Terry, that as all delicacy was thrown aside, the law of libel defied, and the most successful worker he who pulled to shreds the greatest number of reputations in the shortest time, a paper honestly disposed to go to any extent, and frankly acknowledging that the end justified any kind of means, might prove of service to the unpopular cause of the King. They accordingly set up the *John Bull* on the 17th of December, 1820, but not, as far as we can find, under any sort of patronage or promise of patronage from the party whom it was intended to assist. They had great difficulty in getting a publisher to undertake the doubly-hazardous enterprise; Miller, their publisher, shook his head, and would have nothing to do with it; but at last Shackell, a popular printer, undertook it, agreeing to divide the profits with Hook, and Terry's name soon vanishes from the business. All was kept in darkness; a nominal editor was found at a weekly salary; a man of straw as ostensible publisher; and Hook and Shackell stepped back into the shade and watched the result. It exceeded all their expectations: the publishing office was besieged; they had only provided seven hundred and fifty stamps, and they had to set to work to supply the unlooked-

for demand on unstamped paper, the publisher making the necessary affidavit that the duty should be paid on Monday. At the sixth week the sale was ten thousand. The first five numbers were reprinted more than once, and the first and second kept in stereotype. The great attraction (as the cause it advocated was notoriously the unpopular one) must have been the unlimited audacity and unbridled license of the new paper. No means were spared by its conductors to destroy the Court of Brandenburgh House; every lady who visited the Queen was marked, and everything that could be raked up against her published, every crack or flaw in her reputation made the most of; the clergy who included the Queen's name in the Litany were attacked and reviled. The effect of all this was prodigious; for, as Hook's biographer says, "Any man reckless of legal consequences or beyond their reach, familiar with the current scandal of the day, and having so powerful an engine as a public paper at his disposal, may inflict a vast amount of injury upon his adversaries. But to these conditions in the present case may be added powers, if not of the very highest order doubtless the best adapted to the purpose; sources of information peculiar and inexplicable; a singleness of purpose and firm conviction of its justice that combined to render 'Bull' the most formidable antagonist that had as yet entered the lists against the Queen."*

As a matter of course *John Bull* soon became acquainted with the law of libel, and its punishments; and even its Court friends could not screen it from the vengeance of the House of Commons, and, on the 6th of May, 1821, a complaint was brought against it of a breach of privilege in publishing a paragraph reflecting on the Honourable Henry Gray Bennett, which the editor had received, as well as some previous mysterious communications, through the hands of a ticket-porter of the Temple. The result was,

* Barham's "Life of Theodore Hook," vol. i. p. 196.

that Weaver, the nominal printer, Cooper, the nominal editor, and even Shackell, were ordered to attend the House; and the two former were committed to Newgate, where they remained from the 11th of May to the 11th of July, when the prorogation of Parliament set them at liberty. But not a breath was heard about the real editor. Gradually, however, suspicion was raised, and Sir Walter Scott is said to have declared that only one man could write such articles, and that man was Theodore Hook. The danger of an exposure was now becoming imminent, and, to check conjecture and throw surmise off the scent, a letter, accompanied by the following audacious article, appeared in the *John Bull*:—

"Mr. Theodore Hook.

"The conceit of some people is amusing, and it has not been unfrequently remarked that conceit is in abundance where talent is most scarce. Our readers will see that we have received a letter from Mr. Hook disowning and disavowing all connexion with this paper. Partly out of good nature, and partly from an anxiety to show the gentleman how little desirous we are to be associated with him, we have made a declaration which will, doubtless, be quite satisfactory to his morbid sensibility and affected squeamishness. We are free to confess that two things surprise us in this business; the first, that anything which we have thought worthy of giving to the public should have been mistaken for Mr. Hook's, and secondly, that *such a person* as Mr. Hook should think himself disgraced by a connexion with *John Bull*."

This incomparable effrontery was followed up next week by the following paragraph:—

"We have received Mr. Theodore Hook's second letter. We are ready to confess that we may have appeared to treat him too unceremoniously; but we will put it to his own feelings, whether the terms of his denial were not in

some degree calculated to produce a little asperity on our part; we shall never be ashamed, however, to do justice, and we readily declare that we meant no kind of imputation on Mr. Hook's personal character."

The *ruse* took, and the public curiosity was, for a time, baffled. The death of the Queen in the summer of 1821 leaving "Bull" alone in the ring, his occupation would seem to have been gone; but a paper bringing in four thousand a-year was not to be lightly abandoned, and Hook turned the whole force of its satire and ridicule against the Whigs and Radicals—poor Joseph Hume, particularly, coming in for an undue share of it, and being the continual butt of the paper. Hook gave him the motto, *Graiis expers catenis*, and freely translated it "I have got rid of my Greek bonds;" * and, taking a dozen lines from Horace, in which some form of the word *Humus* or its cognates occurred, with a latitude of translation, converted them into reflections upon Hume: as *Ex Humili potens*—"From a Surgeon to a Member of Parliament;"* *Ne quis Hum-asse velit*—"Let no one call Hume an ass;" *Humili modo loqui*—"To talk Scotch like Hume;" and other equally ingenious perversions. Hume's ponderous revenge was to rake up the old and much vexed question of the defalcations in the Mauritius Treasury; but Hook danced round him, gave him a hard slap, and was off at his other side before Hume could turn round. Here is a specimen of *John Bull's* banter, in which he makes Hume sing:—

"I hastened my genius to show
Though I dealt not in figure of speech;
But speaking of figures we know
Is ever in Maberley's reach.
And 'tis O, what did become of me?
O, what did I do?
I proved, with a great deal of mummery,
One and one to be equal to two.
Wo, wo! &c.

* In allusion to his antecedents.

"I wish I had stuck to my text,
My fame had continued alive;
But alas! I grew bold and tried next
To prove two and two to make five!
And 'tis O, what did become of me?
O, what did I do?
I swore it, and Walter and Finnerty *
Promised to bluster it through.
Ough, ough!" &c.

But Hook was exhausting his genius, and writing in a dozen different quarters, and the *John Bull* got neglected. Shackell, who had stood his friend all through, and who had supplied all the money expended in fines and prosecutions (about four thousand pounds), remonstrated in vain: a coolness ensued in 1836, which was, however, only of a short duration, and Hook continued to draw his salary as editor till the day of his death, which took place on the 24th of August, 1841, although the proprietorship had long passed into other hands. †

Among the contributors to *John Bull* during Hook's time, were his elder brother, Dr. John Hook, who wrote a series of letters to various statesmen, in a calmer spirit than most of the other articles were conceived in, under the signature of "Fitz-Harding;" and Dr. William Maginn (afterwards so well known in every walk of newspaper and periodical literature), who was fetched over from Cork to write for a Wednesday newspaper which was projected by Hook, to run with the *John Bull*, but abandoned. Maginn, it is said, only wrote one article for "Bull." At a later period Hook was assisted by Thomas Haines Bailey and Richard Dalton Barham ("Thomas Ingoldsby").

The *Statesman*, which had never been in the best repute, about this time went to pieces. It had been bought from Lovell by Sampson Perry, the former editor of the infamous *Argus*, who had returned from France after

* The *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle*.

† Barham's "Life of Theodore Hook," vol. ii. p. 235.

being nine times in French prisons, and escaping only by accident from execution in the time of Robespierre. He had been arrested on his outlawry on setting foot in England, and imprisoned in Newgate, but a change of Ministry released him, and he purchased the *Statesman*. He was soon in pecuniary difficulties; and had only just been discharged from the Insolvent Court, when, in 1820, as he sat at dinner with his wife, he fell back in his chair, saying, "Lord have mercy upon me!" and died. He was a native of Aston near Birmingham. Although he had sold the *Statesman* some two or three years before his death, his connexion with it had impaired its rotten reputation, and it never rose again to a position in the press world.

The number of stamps consumed by the daily London papers in 1821 was above eleven millions. The weekly papers took two, and the country papers seven millions; and the number consumed by the entire kingdom was 23,600,000.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EDITOR'S DUEL—SCOTT AND CHRISTIE—THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSOCIATION, ALIAS "THE BRIDGE STREET GANG"—THE CARLILES AND THEIR WRETCHED TRASH—"THE REPUBLICAN"—PROSECUTION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSOCIATION—BREACH OF PRIVILEGE BY THE "LONDON GAZETTE"—PARLIAMENT IN A PET—THE "JOHN BULL" AGAIN—PREVARICATION AND MYSTIFICATION—COMMITTAL OF THE EDITOR AND PRINTER—FINED AND IMPRISONED BY THE COURTS OF LAW—THE END OF COOPER—THE "EXAMINER" IN PRISON AGAIN—CIRCULATION OF THE "TIMES" AND "OBSERVER"—A POST-OFFICE MONOPOLY—THE CHARGES FOR CARRYING NEWSPAPERS TO OUR COLONIES—THE THUNDER OF THE "TIMES"—CAPTAIN STERLING—LORD BROUGHAM—THOMAS MOORE AND ROBERT SOUTHEY—WILLIAM MUDFORD—SHIEL AND TALFOURD—BARON ALDERSON—DAVID CAREY—DR. TILLOCH—LAYING DOWN THE LAW—A BATCH OF TRIALS—ECCENTRIC RULINGS—THE POST-OFFICE AND THE PRESS—A SURVEY.

SINCE the time of Bate Dudley of the *Morning Herald*, who bore the *soubriquet* of the "bruising parson," editors had refrained from obtruding their personal disputes upon the public, and had bottled up their resentment in their ink; but the year 1821 saw a lamentable departure from this wholesome practice. John Scott, an Aberdeen man, who had edited successively four or five different London papers—the *Censor*, the *Statesman*, the *Champion*, and the *News*—and was now also editor of the "London Magazine," had published some strictures on his northern contemporary and rival, "Blackwood's Magazine," which Christie, the editor of the latter publication, resented. A challenge ensued, and on the 16th of February poor Scott

was shot in a duel by Christie, who, with his second, Mr. Trail, were tried for the murder and acquitted.

An event arose out of the extreme licentiousness of the lower class of newspapers at this period, which gave rise to an immense deal of irritation and resistance—the usurpation by a party of private individuals of the right of censorship over the public press. These noblemen and gentlemen, arrogating to themselves the power of the Attorney-General, formed themselves into a society in March, 1821, called the "Constitutional Association," for the purpose of prosecuting the printers and publishers of all newspapers of *ultra*-liberal politics. The idea was conceived in good faith and in a good spirit no doubt: for, to keep the Opposition printers within such bounds only as to prevent the most glaring daily outrages of public morality and decency, the Government was obliged to be continually dragging them to the criminal bar, which gave a handle to the disaffected to fly for sympathy to the ignorant and lawless, with their old cry of "oppression" or "persecution," or their much abused watchword of "liberty of the press;" and it was not surprising that a party of high-minded gentlemen, disgusted with the flood of filth and obscenity which was daily poured out through the midst of society, should come forward to strengthen the hands of Government in putting down so offensive a nuisance. They had as much right to take up the arms which the law allowed them, against the invaders of all domestic privacy—the wretches who were poisoning the waters of knowlege, which the working classes were beginning to thirst for and drink—the odious scoffers at religion, morality, honour, virtue—as against the midnight burglar, the assassin, or the foreign foe; it was the excess of their zeal making them indiscreet in their selection of offences—it was their partisanship, which tolerated the grossest libels on one side and hounded into gaol the printers on the other—it was, at last, the impure practices of the

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parties who were employed by the society, that have left a blot upon the history of the Constitutional Association, which time will scarcely fade.

The wretched man Carlile was undergoing an imprisonment in Dorchester Gaol, when, on February 3d in this year, his wife, Jane Carlile, was tried in the Court of King's Bench, for a libellous letter in his revolutionary paper the *Republican*, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the same gaol, and to find securities for two years. But the sentence was scarcely passed when it was openly announced that Carlile's sister was ready to proceed with the trade, and, if she followed them to gaol, a hundred after her were prepared to lay down their liberty in assertion of the "right" of publishing this vile and mischievous trash. For vile and mischievous trash it most assuredly was; and it was a heresy against the noble principles of liberty of mind and speech to invoke their sacred name in its defence—a miserable burlesque of heroism to defy the law and public opinion by the obstinate assertion of doctrines which would have been contemptibly ridiculous, but that they were odiously offensive to the well-regulated part of the public. The most ardent lovers of the liberty of the press could never have desired to see such violence and rancour displayed by it, as is exhibited in such articles as the following, which we copy from the *Republican* of October 20th, 1820, not as being by any means the worst of its kind, but as having brought down condign punishment upon Beve, the then publisher of the paper:—"There is not a vice which the King can put his hand upon his heart and say I am innocent of. He has inherited the gross obstinacy of his father, with the avarice and meanness of his mother, without any of their domestic qualities, and to this he has added all that vice can teach or conjecture;" or the following, which Mary Ann Carlile was, on the 24th of July, 1821, convicted of publishing in her brother's paper:—"The Bible

is a book full of wickedness and contradiction." But the mock-heroic went down with the mob, who will always cheer the very worst of criminals if he will only "die game"—that is, show in his bearing, as he swaggers out of life, that he is a sufficiently hardened and unrelenting villain: it was just such an exhibition as the mob delight in; and the mob huzzaed mightily. Moreover, the middle classes had Cobbett, Hone, and Hunt for the gods of their adoration; why should not the lower orders glory in Carlile? They did not distinguish between the three earnest, conscientious, and only too enthusiastic men, who allowed themselves occasionally to be led away by the violence of party feeling, and the one who gave himself up to it to the exclusion of every proper or manly sentiment. The mob mistook the blasphemy of sedition for the religion of patriotism, and set up Carlile as their hero. This led to a fry of smaller rascals setting up in the same trade: so that it may well be imagined the aspect of affairs was sufficiently threatening to the cause of order and morality to justify the interference of parties having any regard for either. But the Constitutional Association, early in its career, overstepped the bounds of duty and usefulness, and became first the tool of a party and then an instrument of extortion. It gained itself the name of the "Bridge-street Gang," by which it is now best known, provoked the formation of a society in opposition to it, was constantly being complained of in petitions to Parliament, and finally, in July of the year of its birth, was prosecuted for oppression and extortion. The Grand Jury returned a true bill against the members, and, although they were acquitted on the trial, the Constitutional Association had received its death blow, and was soon afterwards defunct.

We are startled this year by finding a complaint made against that long since harmless and inoffensive paper, the *London Gazette*, for a breach of privilege. If the axiom hold good that the king can do no wrong, how, we are

tempted to ask, can the king's paper do harm? Nay, but it was the time-honoured prerogative of the House of Commons that it had offended against, and the King himself must respect *that*. Among the petitions which had been presented to the King, was one from the presbytery of Langholme, in the county of Dumfries, complaining of the "violent and unconstitutional speeches of the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, and the infamous scurrility and misrepresentations of a licentious press." This address was printed in the *Gazette*, and stated to have been graciously received! Naturally it gave great offence to the Opposition, and Sir John Newport called the attention of the House to it as a breach of privilege; for the publication of addresses in the *Gazette* was not a matter of course, but of selection, resting with the Secretary of State, and the insertion of this one seemed to give it the endorsement of the Government. Lord Castlereagh explained that it had crept in by inadvertence, and admitted that the tone of the memorial unfitted it for publication in the *Gazette;* but the House would be satisfied with nothing short of an apology for its appearance, and on the 2d of February the ministry expressed their regret at the occurrence, and so the matter dropped.*

The House had again drawn itself up upon its privileges, and having tasted of submission, and that too the submission of a Government, it was insatiate. The press had a sorry time of it, for the press was made the victim of each party's attacks upon its rival. If the Government locked up some reporters or editors, the Opposition made reprisals among the Government papers; so that the newspaper writers, on whichever side, were never safe; for there were always a sufficient number of arrogant country members on both sides of the House, who could

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. iv. (1821) p. 288.

not see that *any* papers had *any* right to do *any* thing, and who, by uniformly voting against the press, carried down the scale without caring which party threw in the first bone of contention.

On the 8th of March, Mr. Stuart Wortley complained that the *Morning Chronicle* had attributed wrong motives to members of the House, by heading its list of the minority who voted for the reception of a petition from a prisoner complaining of the conduct of the judge who tried him, "The List of the Minority who voted against Lord Castlereagh's admonition to the people of England not to trouble and take up the time of the House of Commons with their petitions." We should indeed form a very inadequate idea of the laxity of the times, did we build it upon Lord Castlereagh's assertion that "certainly a more detestable and wicked libel had never been published;" but so great is the power of party and personal feeling to exaggerate anything which concerns itself! The motion for the appearance of the printer of this "detestable and wicked libel" was, after a long debate, withdrawn by the Government party; but the Opposition owed them one, and, on the 18th of March, the public time was again wasted on a complaint of breach of privilege, brought by Sir R. Ferguson against the *Morning Post*, for acusing Mr. Creevy (for whom Sir Robert had acted as "friend") of something very like cowardice in an affair of honour with Sir G. Warrender. He, however, does not press for punishment; but, in an enlargement of his remarks, he adds, "a similar libel had appeared in a Sunday paper called *John Bull*. As to that paper, he considered it a stain upon the public press of the country; a most malicious, false, and rascally publication!"

The *John Bull* had, indeed, about this time, attained the full swing of its defiance of the laws of discussion and decorum. And a prosecution in which it was involved for libel, instead of checking it, had lent even a

recklessness to its tone, as, suspended over the gulf of punishment from the two heights of light raillery and crushing abuse, it trusted to the thread of satire, and went swinging on with a daring that made men stand still and almost admire it. Its "pluck" is unquestioned by its foes—its information mysterious—its disguise is perfect. The House of Commons made one determined effort to penetrate the mask, but it only got hold of the empty hide of "Bull," the horns that had gored it were not there. Mr. Bennett, on the 8th of May, complained that the *John Bull* had been guilty of a gross breach of privilege in asserting that he had made an apology to the Lord President of the Court of Session, on account of a challenge received from the President's son, thus insinuating that a member of that House could be guilty of cowardice. The House resents the idea, and orders the attendance of Weaver, the printer, "in order to find out the author." But in this it is baffled by the most ingenious piece of prevarication, mystification, and contradiction, sounding very much like direct perjury, that was ever listened to with amazement. On the 9th of May, Weaver attends according to order, and now we find the old fox doubling and continually throwing his pursuers off the scent, till they give it up dead beat. The examination would be highly amusing, did we not feel a painful consciousness that the man is false-swearing. He is sole proprietor, yet some one else is associated with him; he has purchased the paper, yet paid no money for it—nor, indeed, has any price ever been fixed; he is a master printer, yet receives a salary; he believes the editor lives somewhere near the Blackfriars-road, but knows not where; and all they can get out of him is that one Henry Cooper is the editor, at a salary of three guineas a-week, which sometimes he himself pays him—at least he believes he paid it on one occasion—and sometimes it is paid by Thomas Arrowsmith and William Shackell,

who have some sort of commercial interest, which he contrives to mystify most amusingly, in the paper. And accordingly Arrowsmith, Shackell, and the sham editor, Cooper, are ordered to attend, which they all do on the 10th. But the House gets on no better with them. Such inveterate Sam Wellers were never before at the bar. Arrowsmith says he has sold the paper to Weaver, and on being asked "for what consideration?" hardily answers "None!" He let Weaver print it with his types and presses in a house adjoining his (Arrowsmith's) own, and for which he (the witness) paid the rent—"for what consideration?" "None!" He gave up the right of printing the paper to Weaver, yet still reserves the right of dropping it when he may think proper. Shackell is a degree more candid; he admits that he got rid of the paper to avoid the consequences of a prosecution. For the rest, the paper belongs to Weaver, yet they (Arrowsmith and Shackell) pay him three guineas a-week for superintending its bringing out. Weaver was to have the profits, and Arrowsmith and himself to share whatever losses might accrue to it. He and Arrowsmith generally received the payments, but only in trust for Weaver; he was Weaver's friend only, and "presumed it was common for one man to take care of another man's money." Cooper admits that he wrote the paragraph, but now, finding it was false, regrets having been the author of it. The House had now discovered the author of the paragraph complained of, but they want to find out the author of *John Bull*, and go on examining his counterfeit about the business affairs of the paper, which, if parliamentary, was at least not justifiable. All they could get out of him, matched the evidence of the others; he considered Mr. Weaver his master, although Arrowsmith and Shackell employed and paid him. As for the information, he got that from "general rumour," although he had talked to no one about it.

Mr. Bennett and the House were wearied, and the former declaring "he would say nothing of the falsehood displayed, of the perjury exhibited, of the shameful evidence given by these mere creatures of straw," avowed that his object had been "to extract from the wretches who had appeared at the bar who the persons were that employed them," and ended by moving that the Attorney-General be instructed to prosecute the author and printers of the libel. The Government were on the defensive to-night, and the Marquis of Londonderry pointed out, truly enough, that it would be unjust to commence proceedings against these men upon evidence which had been extracted from themselves in the course of an irregular examination. A long debate, in the course of which it was hinted that "there was some one of higher station than the prisoners" in the background, ended in the withdrawal of Mr. Bennett's motion, the committal of Henry Fox Cooper and Robert Thomas Weaver to Newgate, and the discharge of Arrowsmith and Shackell.* Whether Bennett had any suspicion as to who was the real editor of the paper we cannot tell, but it is remarkable that, on the 26th of June, in the same year, he it was who moved for the inquiry into the defaults of Theodore Hook at the Mauritius.

We may here anticipate a little to see how the *John Bull* ran the gauntlet of the lawyers. On the 24th of November, 1821, Arrowsmith and Shackell were sentenced by the Court of King's Bench to pay a fine of five hundred pounds each, and to give security, themselves in five hundred pounds and two sureties in two hundred and fifty pounds each, for their good behaviour for five years, and Weaver to pay a fine of a hundred pounds, for a libel *on the memory* of Lady Caroline Wrottesley. On April 22d in the next year, Alderman Waithman obtained

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. v. (1821) pp. 549-53, 589-98, 633-51, 656-81.

five hundred pounds damages for libel against them; and on May the 28th Arrowsmith was sentenced by the Court of King's Bench to pay a fine of three hundred pounds, and Shackell and Weaver to pay a hundred pounds each, and be imprisoned for three months, for libels on the Queen; and on January the 4th, 1822, the worthy trio were again indicted for libels on her memory.

And thus the *John Bull* dashed on among the breakers and the rocks and shoals of the sea of faction, apparently manned only by a piratical crew, but with that daring but invisible hand always on the helm or at the guns, equally handy and ever ready at running down an antagonist by a shock, a collision, and a crash, or effectually silencing him with a broadside. And Cooper and Weaver, Shackell and Arrowsmith, went to prison and paid fines, but not a word escaped them about Theodore Hook. In this lay all the honour, we fear, we can award them. Cooper afterwards (in 1826) started a spurious paper called *Cooper's John Bull*, but it proved a failure, and he died in embarrassed circumstances, August 21st, 1838.

The *John Bull* was not the only paper against which the Parliament was waging war. On the 28th of May, 1821, John Hunt, described as "the editor" of the *Examiner*, was again sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and to find securities for future good behaviour, for publishing a libel on the House of Commons.

The circulation of the daily papers at this time was only reckoned by thousands—scarcely, with the exception of the *Times*, by tens of thousands. The latter paper was still steadily increasing the distance between itself and its competitors, notwithstanding (perhaps on account of) the opposition it encountered from the Government. This opposition was so marked that the attention of the House of Commons was called to it on the 29th of May, when Mr. Hume complained that the Government advertisements, which were regularly sent to journals with a

circulation of only a few hundreds daily, were systematically withheld from the *Times*, which could give them ten times the publicity. The weekly papers had not yet counted their readers by the hundred thousand; and it was thought a great thing that the *Observer* should have sold sixty-one thousand five hundred double papers on the 22d of June, 1821, with the report of the Coronation of George the Fourth; consuming 133,000 fourpenny stamps, and paying two thousand pounds duty to the revenue. Their circulation was almost entirely restricted to the United Kingdom. Very few were sent to our colonies in those days. The number which passed through the Post-office for our possessions abroad was in fact upon the decrease. In 1810, it had been 383; in 1817, it had dropped to 271; and now, in 1821, it was only 206. The falling off was occasioned by the increased rates extorted for the carriage of newspapers under the provisions of an old Act of Parliament, which "authorised certain officers of the Post-office to apply the rates so levied to their own use." These short-sighted monopolists had now raised them almost to a prohibitory height. The charge for a daily paper was twelve pounds, fourteen shillings—for a three times a-week paper, seven pounds, fourteen shillings, and fourpence,—and for a weekly one, about two pounds, four shillings! We need no longer marvel at the smallness of the number sent out.

We have said that the *Times* was rapidly distancing its competitors; but this was not by the unaided efforts of Barnes; for we believe that Captain Sterling had already begun writing those daring articles which acquired for themselves and the paper in which they appeared the name of "The Thunderer." This writer, more terrible with the pen than with the sword, had been a captain in the militia, and retained with some military pride his title to the last. Edward Sterling was the son of a curate of the Cathedral of Waterford, in which city he was born on the

27th of February, 1773. His early character was thoroughly Irish—he was full of fun and frolic, loud and rollicking, excitable, unsettled, and somewhat ostentatious. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, with a view to the bar, but the Rebellion breaking out when he had reached his twenty-fifth year he joined the corps of volunteers formed by the Irish barristers, and imbibed tastes military. He was engaged with the rebels at Vinegar Hill, and in two other actions, and, "returning home in triumph," disdained the lawyer's slothful life, and obtained a commission in the Cheshire Militia, from which he volunteered into the line, and became a captain in the eighth battalion of reserve. In 1804 he married Hester, only daughter of John Coningham, merchant, of Derry, but in the very next year he was reduced to half-pay, by his regiment being broken. Here was an end of soldiering and a beginning of matrimony; and he turned his sword into a ploughshare, took the farm of Kaimes Castle in the Isle of Bute, and thought he was going to be a very industrious agriculturist. But agriculture was not suited to his impetuous disposition, nor Kaimes Castle to his active mind; he wanted to be stirring about the great world,—here, there, and everywhere. The house had been selected because it was the dilapidated remains of a baronial residence, in which he could figure himself living "in a style otherwise unattainable," and the farm—a secondary consideration at first—became, in his hands, unproductive; he, therefore, in 1809, removed to a cottage unencumbered with a farm, at Llanblethian, near Cowbridge, in Glamorganshire: and, on the appointment of the Marquis of Bute, got the adjutancy of the Glamorganshire Militia, which brought him in a small income. In 1811 he wrote a pamphlet on Military Reform, which he dedicated to the Duke of Kent; and in 1812 sent a series of letters to the editor of the *Times*, with the signature of "Vetus," which were reprinted afterwards in two volumes, and passed through a second edition.

Chafing and fretting at the monotony of his retired residence, he was soon induced to come to London; and, in 1814, he went over to Paris, with some ulterior hope of being appointed to the post of foreign correspondent of the *Times;* but on the sudden return of Napoleon from Elba, Sterling and his family had to make a hasty flight to England, whither he returned on the 20th of March, 1815, and permanently settled in London*—first in Russell-square, then in Blackfriars-road, then at Blackheath, and lastly at Brompton, where he continued to write the Thunderer upon a salary, it has been said, of two thousand a-year and a share of the paper. He had seven children, all of whom, except Anthony and John, he had the great grief to see droop into the grave at tender ages; and the last named was that promising young man, so early lost, who has been honoured with a biography by Carlyle. Captain Sterling, either from his native impatience, from an aversion to application, or from deficiency of knowledge, had to be crammed—and that not without some difficulty—with the facts of the case on which he had to write, and when he had mastered them his remarks poured forth like a torrent—there was no lack of words of force and power; and the public was astonished and delighted by one of those flashing cannonades which thundered ever and anon from the artillery of the *Times.*

Brougham is believed to have written occasional leaders for the *Times* about this time, and Moore was very nearly doing so, as we find by his Journal for 1822:—

"17*th August.*—Received to-day a letter from Brougham, enclosing one from Barnes (the editor of the *Times*), proposing that, as he is ill, I should take his place in writing the leading articles of that paper, the pay to be a hundred pounds a month."

* Carlyle's "Life of John Sterling," p. 31, *et alia.*

"18*th August*.—Wrote to decline the proposal of the *Times*."*

Southey was once offered the editorship of the *Times* with a salary of two thousand per annum, but declined it.

In this year Street retired from the editorship of the *Courier*, and was succeeded by William Mudford, author of the "Contemplatist," a series of essays; of "Mary of Buttermere," a novel; "The Five Nights of Saint Alban's," &c.; in whose hands the paper began to decay.

It is described in the next year as "a paper of shifts and expedients: of base assertions and thoughtless impudence. It denies facts on the word of a minister, and dogmatises by authority."† In truth, the *prestige* of the *Courier* had flown with the war, and the other evening papers were distancing it. The *Sun* had got a name for talent, when its prosperity was checked by the quarrel among its proprietors. Its first editor, Heriot, had got a good appointment in the West Indies, and it had been carefully edited by Robert Clark, many years printer and publisher of the *London Gazette*, and afterwards by Jerdan, assisted by Fladgate, the facetious lawyer, Mulloch, and John Taylor, the author of "Monsieur Tonson." During that time, and after getting his pension of three hundred a-year from the Government, Doctor Wolcott wrote epigrams for it, as well as for the *Morning Post*.‡

The *Globe* had absorbed the *Traveller*, and some of its writers; among them Gibbons Merle, the author of some articles on the press which appeared in the early numbers of the "Westminster Review," and Colonel Torrens, a quondam shareholder in the *Traveller*. Torrens was a native of Ireland, and was born in 1783. Entering the marines at an early age, he got a captain's commission at

* Lord John Russell's "Journal, Correspondence, and Memoir of Thomas Moore," vol. iii. p. 362.

† Edinburgh Review (May, 1823), vol. xxxviii. p. 367.

‡ Taylor's "Records of My Life," vol. ii. p. 233.

twenty-three, and in March, 1811, commanded the marine garrison of the Island of Amholt against the Danes, and was promoted to the rank of major. He subsequently served as colonel of a Spanish Legion.

As the *Courier's* star paled, these papers were seen coming out of the shade; and though great and heavy clouds were gathering up before the *Sun*, it came from behind them split in two, and another and a noisy competitor for the support of the evening readers, the *True Sun*, jostled the quiet and effete *Courier*.

It has been stated by Mr. Knight Hunt, and others, that Richard Lalor Shiel began his career by sitting in the gallery to report those speeches which he afterwards himself eclipsed in the Senate, but on what authority we cannot discover. Neither the Memoir by Mr. MacNevin, nor the more elaborate Life of Shiel by Mr. MacCullagh, even hint at the fact. We only know that he did on several occasions send reports of *his own* speeches to the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Times*, the *Sun*, and *Carrick's Morning Post* (Dublin). It is more certain that about this time Thomas Noon Talfourd "took his place among that intelligent and important body who have already furnished a larger number of eminent public men to statesmanship and literature than any other profession in proportion to its limited numbers—parliamentary reporters."* He was, we believe, attached to the staff of the *Times*, as was also, in early life, the late Mr. Baron Alderson.

David Carey, the author of a poem called "The Pleasures of Memory," and also of "Lochiel, and other Poems," who had edited the *Statesman* for some years, died in October, 1824; and on January 26th, 1825, a more accomplished editor, Alexander Tilloch, LL.D. Dr. Tilloch was the son of a tobacconist in Glasgow, where he was born, on the 28th of February, 1759. In 1781 he invented the

* Memoir of Mr. Justice Talfourd, p. 9 (Reprinted from the Law Magazine).

process of stereotyping (although he had to share the honour with other contemporary claimants, who, by a remarkable coincidence, invented it almost simultaneously), and entered into the business; but he soon laid it aside and came to London. After a time he was induced to return to Glasgow, and join his father and brother in the tobacco business, but it not proving successful, he again turned to printing. In 1787 he came back to London and bought a share in the *Star* newspaper, which he edited for some time. He also edited the "Philosophical Magazine."

The law still kept a tight rein over the press, and some discussions in the courts as to the rights and immunities, the liberties and the privileges of the newspapers, occur about this time, and give occasion to the judges to lay down the law of the period as it affects them. Some of these display the advance of liberal ideas in strong relief against the dark background where prejudice and intolerance may yet be discerned struggling with the press. On the 11th of December, 1820, Wright, the bookseller and editor of the "Parliamentary History," got a thousand pounds damages from Cobbett for libels in the *Political Register*. In Trinity Term, 1822, one Hunt, the proprietor of a pugilistic, boxing, and sparring exhibition, brought an action in the Court of Common Pleas against the proprietor of *Bell's Life in London* for a libel, imputing misconduct to him in the management of his exhibition. The plaintiff made good his plea that he had received special damage from the publication of the article, but the judge ruled that he could not sue for it, as his occupation was an illegal one.*

On the other hand, in the course of a criminal information tried before Chief Justice Abbott, in the Court of King's Bench, in 1823, in which Daniel Whittle Harvey, the proprietor, and Chapman, the printer, of the *True Sun*

* Moore's "Reports," vol. vii. p. 212.

were the defendants, the judge held that the assertion of that paper, that the King was insane, was a criminal libel, "calculated to vilify and scandalise his Majesty, and to bring him into contempt among his subjects." The jury returned a verdict of guilty, but recommended the defendants to mercy. An application for a new trial made on the 8th of November, 1823, was, however, refused.*

On the 14th of October, the *Morning Herald* published, in the ordinary way in its police reports, a statement which had been made by a captain trading to Honduras, before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, describing the horrible condition in which he had found the unfortunate Poyais emigrants, and warning the unwary against being seduced to the barren swamp in which so many wretched emigrants, more especially from Leith, deceived by the misrepresentations of emigration agents, now lay at the mercy of fever, starvation, and a hundred other deaths. He stated that he had brought away two orphans, left friendless by the death of their parents, and that hundreds had besought him to rescue them from the horrors by which they were surrounded.

The Lord Mayor referred the captain to the representatives of the press, who would forward the purpose of his statement by giving it publicity, and the next day, the *Morning Herald* accordingly gave a fair and correct report of what transpired, without a word of addition or comment of its own. Yet one of the promoters of the Poyais bubble, a Mr. McGregor, considered himself aggrieved by the report, and brought an action against Mr. Thwaites, the proprietor of the paper, which was tried in the Court of King's Bench. The jury affirmed the defendant's plea that the report was a correct one, but the plaintiff got leave to enter judgment; and, in 1824, the question of libel was

* Barnewall and Cresswell's "Cases in the Court of King's Bench," vol. ii. p. 258.

argued before the judges, who unanimously ruled that the *vivâ voce* statement of the captain was not a libel when it was first uttered, inasmuch as the Lord Mayor was not in his public capacity when it was made to him, but that the publication in the newspaper made the statement libellous, and the publisher was the only party against whom the plaintiff had a remedy. The rule was therefore made absolute against the defendant.*

A very similar case occurred soon afterwards, in which the same paper was singled out for prosecution for publishing reports of the proceedings in the police courts. A solicitor, named Duncan, was examined at Bow-street on a charge of indecently assaulting a female child, and the *Morning Herald* having published a short report of his examination, Duncan brought his action against the publisher for libel, "because no bill of indictment had been preferred against the plaintiff, nor had any trial of the plaintiff by a jury of the county been had or taken place for or in respect of the said charge." The verdict was for the plaintiff in this case.†

The newspapers were thus running immense risks in publishing police reports at all‡—it was more dangerous work even than parliamentary reporting had ever been; but, fortunately, we do not meet with many cases in which the prisoner, who has been in the dock or at the bar of the police court, has the hardihood to seek damages from the papers reporting his appearance. It would seem to us strange law and monstrous injustice now, but the publishing of a correct report of the evidence subjected the publisher to damages of as much amount as the jury might think the character of the plaintiff worth, or equivalent to

* Barnewall and Cresswell's "Cases," vol. iii. pp. 24-37.

† Ibid, pp. 556-85.

‡ A collection of the most remarkable police reports from the *Morning Herald* was published in 1824, under the title of "Mornings at Bow-street," by Thomas Wright, the reporter, and had a great run.

the injury it might be supposed to have sustained. For, on the 16th of February, 1811, in a criminal information against the *Day* newspaper, Lord Ellenborough had laid it down that "it was libellous to publish the preliminary examination before a magistrate, previously to committing a man for trial, or holding him to bail for any offence with which he is charged; "the tendency of such a publication being to prejudice the minds of jurymen against the accused, and to deprive him of a fair trial."*

This is no longer the state of the law of libel, but newspapers, of their own sense of fairness and propriety, generally abstain from making comments on any untried case. But, in the latter part of the "Georgian Era," although some of the judges began to doubt whether a report of the proceedings in a public court, if given correctly, were not allowable, it is astonishing how strict the most liberal of them were in preventing anything exceeding by a hair's breadth the strict definition of a correct report, or taking the faintest appearance of comment. Three cases in point occur to us. The first is that of the King *versus* Fleet, which was a criminal information against William Fleet, the printer of the *Brighton Herald*, tried in the Court of King's Bench, at Guildhall, on the 11th of February, 1818. There had been a riot at Brighton, and the high constable, in the excess of his zeal in the cause of order, had called out the military—whether judiciously or not was the moot question—and a man was shot. In reporting the proceedings of the coroner's inquest, the *Brighton Herald* had made some observations on the conduct of the high constable, the most severe which we can find being, "The conduct of the high constable was, to say the least of it, imprudent." The judges held that, although the pleas put in of the correctness of the report, and the absence of malice on the part of the

* Campbell's "Nisi Prius Cases," vol. ii. pp. 563-75.

defendant, were true, a rule must issue on the comment attached to the report.*

The offence in the second case is still more venial—the libel lay only in the heading. At the Kent Summer Assizes of 1818, an action had been brought by a Mr. Lewis, an attorney, against Clement of the *Observer*, for libel in reporting some proceedings which occurred in the Insolvent Debtors Court, referring to Mr. Lewis' conduct in a case which had been before the Court. The defendant pleaded that the alleged libel was only a correct report of what had taken place, and the jury returned a verdict in his favour; but on the 21st of June, 1820, the verdict was set aside in the Court of King's Bench, London, and judgment given for the plaintiff, the judges being of opinion that the heading of the report, "Shameful Conduct of an Attorney," was libellous, and not a part of the report itself.†

In the next case we are treated to even a finer distinction: the exact words of the evidence were not reported *in extenso*, but the sense and bearing of the evidence only given. This occurs in Lewis *v.* Walter, on account of the report of a trial copied into the *Times* out of the *Hampshire Telegraph*, in which, instead of the words of the evidence being given, it is said "the witness proved the allegations contained in the speech of the learned counsel." Chief Justice Abbott, before whom the case was tried in the Court of King's Bench, on the 26th of June, 1821, decided that the defendant's plea of justification on account of the correctness of the report was inadmissible. "Now that justification cannot be supported," says the learned judge; "the defendant ought to have detailed and transcribed in the publication the evidence of the witness. If he had

* Barnewall and Alderson's "Reports of Cases in the Court of King's Bench," vol. i. pp. 379-85.

† Barnewall and Alderson's "Reports," vol. iii. pp. 702-10.

done so, his readers might then have judged for themselves. If a party is to be allowed to publish what passes in a court of justice, he must publish the whole case, and not merely state the conclusion which he himself draws from the evidence."*

To those who so well know the circumlocutions, repetitions, and redundancies which the law employs,—the devious ways by which it beats about to the truth (and often loses itself and the truth too in the search)—it must be sufficiently obvious, that the *verbatim* publication of the evidence, in even the simplest and clearest cause, would trespass rather inconveniently upon the space which a newspaper has at its disposal. So the papers went on, giving their readers, daily, reports of law and police cases, for which they might, at any moment, be mulcted in heavy damages, or their publishers subjected to imprisonment and fine. The principle involved was a grand one, for it amounted to this — whether our Courts of Judicature should be open to the public (in the full sense of the word), or not; for the presence of the few spectators whom the Courts will accommodate, can scarcely be called a publicity sufficient for the protection of our liberties and rights.

The Post-office, which had put almost a prohibitory postage upon the newspapers transmitted to our colonies, as we have already seen, did not even afford them an altogether free circulation through the interior of the kingdom. Up till this time, it had been necessary to have the signature of a member of Parliament upon the wrapper of a newspaper to admit of its going free from one part of Great Britain to another by post; but, in 1825, an Act of Parliament was passed, to allow newspapers to pass free of postage, provided they were open at the ends, and there was no writing on them beyond the address of the party for whom they were destined. Another Act also passed

* Barnewall and Alderson's "Reports," vol. iv. pp. 605-16.

this year, for relieving the papers from restrictions as to size, and allowing them to be printed upon paper of any dimensions.

The more stormy part of the career of the newspaper has passed, and been now fully recorded. The contest for admission into Parliament; the constant battle of reporting; the right of comment on public events, and strictures upon public characters; the privilege of a jury to decide what is and what is not a libel;—all these questions had been fought and won. The concessions of greater facilities of circulation—of liberty to increase the size to meet the requirements—had been gained. The character of the press had become elevated by the accession of men of genius, honour, and independence, whose weapons were of polished steel, not of heavy wood; the cloud of a day which had obscured the press with its black licentiousness had rolled away; and the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which had seen more prosecutions against newspapers, fining of editors, committals of reporters, and imprisonment of printers, than any previous period of equal length in the history of the press—closed upon a calm, which has since scarcely been ruffled, except during the obstinate attempt to establish an unstamped press in defiance of the law, and the periodical and unwearying efforts to get the stamp duty remitted with the sanction of the law. Into the history of these movements it will be our duty to penetrate, when we have ascertained what progress the press has made in the provinces and abroad since our last visitation; and our story will now be of active enterprise, unflagging history, exalted character, and shining talent, raising the fabric of the press after the good old Saxon order.

But, in recalling the struggles and conflicts which the press has just gone through, and especially where breach of privilege was the cause of war, it can scarcely fail to have been observed how nobly the dignified conduct of the

House of Lords contrasted with the petulant snappishness of the House of Commons. From 1819 till 1825 scarcely a week of the Session passed but what some over-sensitive member of the lower House came fretting about some liberty the papers had taken with his sacred name; some mistake they had made in reporting his inspired orations; some misconstruction they had put upon his meaning—if he had any: but the upper House, in which we heard none of the empty prating about the liberties of the press, gave way to no such fits of querulousness, but went on legislating in a dignified composure, and left the newspapers to make such comments as they chose.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRESS IN THE PROVINCES—GENERAL VIEW OF THE COUNTRY PAPERS—LEADING ARTICLES INTRODUCED—BENJAMIN FLOWER—HEWSON CLARKE—A DAILY PAPER AT LIVERPOOL—DOCTOR SOLOMON—BURGESS STARTS A DAILY PAPER AT MANCHESTER—NEWSPAPER EXPRESSES—THE "BRITISH VOLUNTEER"—JOHN VINT—LONDON EDITORS OF COUNTRY PAPERS—JAMES MONTGOMERY—THE "SHEFFIELD IRIS"—TRIAL OF MONTGOMERY—HOLLAND AND EVERETT'S MODEST LIFE OF HIM—MR. H. BARKER, "THE OLD SAILOR"—PRINTER-EDITORS—JAMES SIMMONS, PETER GEDGE, THOMAS FLINDELL, "ET HOC GENUS"—ROBERT RAIKES, WILLIAM STEVENSON, "ET ID GENUS"—EDWARD RUSHTON—A GROSS LIBEL—AND A DIRTY PAPER—COLONEL BERKELEY CUDGELS AN EDITOR—THE EDITOR GETS DAMAGES.

LEAVING the London papers for a time, we will revert to the provincial press, and see what progress it has been making since we last glanced over it. Then—at the close of the last century—it was spreading far and wide, with a growth that, though rapid, was vigorous; it now nearly covered the length and breadth of the land. There was scarcely a town of any importance without its newspaper, and that newspaper a sheet that would bear a comparison with its metropolitan contemporaries. Leading articles (first introduced by Mr. Flower, of the *Cambridge Journal*, and brought out in the north by Mr. Baines, of the *Leeds Mercury*, in 1801) were becoming common in the country papers. Literature was cultivated more, and gossip less; a better style of composition was observable, and a higher tone adopted, and more worthy topics selected for consideration. In 1804 and 1805, the *Tyne Mercury*, a Newcastle paper, published a series of essays called the "Saunterer," contributed by Hewson Clarke, which were afterwards thought worthy of being collected and published

in two duodecimo volumes, in which form they went through two editions. We no longer find the editors falling back upon the Bible to fill up their columns.

A daily paper, too, had been established out of London! The first attempt to start a morning paper in the provinces was made by Doctor Solomon, the proprietor of the quack medicine known by the name of the "Balm of Gilead," who published No. 1 of the *Mercantile Gazette, and Liverpool and Manchester Daily Advertiser*, on the 6th of August, 1811. It is true, we believe, it had not a very lengthened existence; but the experiment was again made in 1821, when Henry Burgess started the *Northern Express and Lancashire Daily Post.* This paper, the first number of which appeared on the 1st of December, was printed in London and Stockport, and published at Manchester: and Burgess started a swift conveyance to run in eight-mile stages with two horses from London to Liverpool and Manchester at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Notwithstanding his most spirited exertions, however, the second attempt at founding a provincial daily paper miscarried, and the *Northern Express* died at the age of three months.

Enterprise was at work, accelerating the passage of intelligence from London, and an honourable emulation existed between the papers, where there were more than one in a district, the result of which was the calling into action all their energies and capital to get the earliest news from town. The first attempt at an "Express" was made in 1804 by the *British Volunteer*, a paper established at Manchester on June the 30th. The Express met the London Mail at Derby, and returned to Manchester with sufficient diligence to allow of the news being printed in the *Volunteer* some hours before the ordinary letters by the mail were delivered, a feat which soon procured a large circulation for the paper. The *Volunteer* was for some time under the management of a man who had had experience in the work in London—John Vint, a native of

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who had acted as a kind of sub-editor on the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*, but who, on leaving London, had first edited *Harrop's Manchester Mercury* and then the *British Volunteer*, and who finally went to Douglas, where he died, on the 18th of March, 1814, at the age of sixty, editor of the *Isle of Man Weekly Gazette*.

It was not unusual even at this time for a country paper to have a London editor. Writing of the year 1812, Mr. Jerdan says: "It was better and more congenial employment to edit provincial newspapers in London, which, though absurd as it may seem at first sight, is just as effective (with a sub-editor on the spot for the local news, &c.) as if the writer resided at the place of publication; for the political intelligence had to come from town to be handled in the country, and it was quite as easy and expeditious to have the news and the commentaries sent down together. I do not know whether the railroad system and the greater importance of the leading provincial journals may now have altered the practice, but it was previously a source of considerable revenue to the gentlemen engaged in such communications. Thus I edited the *Sheffield Mercury* for a number of years, and at other times a Birmingham, a Staffordshire Potteries, and an Irish journal (for [the last of] which I never was paid), and others in various parts of the country."* In 1823, Jerdan was writing essays in the *Chelmsford Chronicle*.

But, without question, the most eminent provincial editor of the time—and his editorial career lasted throughout the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and ended with it—was James Montgomery, the Sheffield poet, and for more than thirty years the editor of the *Sheffield Iris*. In the year 1794, the *Sheffield Register* had got into collision with the Government, and Gales, the proprietor, took

* Autobiography of William Jerdan, vol. i. p. 110.

leave of his readers, and made off, to escape a prosecution. The connexion, both of subscribers and advertisers, was too good a one to be lost, and Montgomery induced an Unitarian preacher, named Naylor, to join him in purchasing the good-will and copyright of the paper for five hundred pounds, and the plant and materials for sixteen hundred; and on the 4th of July, the *Register* was transformed into the *Sheffield Iris*, "published by James Montgomery and Co."* He had not long possessed the paper, when he was tried and imprisoned for a seditious libel, printed at his press, but not in his paper; but on the 21st of January, 1796, he was tried for a libel which appeared in the *Iris*, in the shape of a report of some disturbances at Sheffield, in which Colonel Athorpe, of the Volunteers, had ordered his men to fire upon the mob, of which two or three were thus killed. The trial, which was on the prosecution of the Colonel, took place at Dorchester, on the 21st of January, 1796, and Montgomery was found guilty, and sentenced to be imprisoned in York Castle for six months, to pay a fine of thirty pounds to the King, and to give security for his good behaviour for two years, himself in two hundred pounds and two sureties in fifty pounds each. We need not follow the fortunes of the *Iris* any farther, for they were uneventful, and the reader can find them for himself, recorded in the *seven volumes* in which his biographers have so elaborately contrived to *minimise* the poet, by lifting him off his pedestal and putting him on the table on which they were exhibiting themselves in a burlesque of Boswell and Johnson. It will be sufficient to say that Montgomery always advocated in his paper the principles of reform and civil and religious liberty; the abolition of negro slavery, and all the views adopted by the more advanced class of politicians of his age: and that, on disposing of it and retiring into private life in 1825, he

* Holland and Everett's "Life of James Montgomery," vol. i. p. 175.

was invited by some of the most influential of his townspeople to a dinner, which took place at the Tontine Hotel, on the 4th of November, his birthday, at which one hundred and sixteen persons were present, and Lord Milton presided.*

Another country editor of London renown was Mr. M. H. Barker, so well known by his naval works under the pseudonym of "The Old Sailor," who edited the *Nottingham and Newark Mercury*, from the period of its foundation in September, 1825, for many years.

Of the rest, the greater number of provincial editors were the intelligent and industrious printers who established the papers, or bought the press at which they were printed. Their history is uniform: they are all Hogarth's industrious apprentices—they start poor—are steady and thrifty—marry their master's daughter—succeed to his property and business—get rich—and die in an alderman's gown, a sheriff's chain, or a councillor's fur. We will trace the career of one or two of the most notable—it is the story of the lot.

In February, 1807, there died at Canterbury one of these worthy persevering men, James Simmons. His father had been a barber in an obscure part of the city near the Cathedral. He was born in 1740, and educated at the King's school, and by the aid of friends afterwards sent to London and apprenticed to Mr. Thomas Greenhill, a stationer, opposite the Mansion House. In this service, by frugality and industry, he contrived to earn and save a little money, so that, on his health failing him and his being obliged to return to his native air in 1768, he was enabled to set up as printer on his own account, and was then the only printer in Kent. Some years afterwards, the *Kentish Post, or Canterbury News*, originally started about 1718, was resuscitated, consisting of four folio pages, of which at least

* Life of James Montgomery, vol. iv. p. 133.

a third of the front one was taken up with a rough woodcut and title, and the whole only contained two or three advertisements. Simmons, perceiving no attempts at improvement upon this rough original, as years wore on, was tempted into the field of competition, and offered his fellow-townsmen a newspaper very far superior in its contents and getting-up—the *Kentish Gazette*. He was well rewarded, for the paper soon gained a large and remunerative circulation. Simmons was also a local patriot and public benefactor. He set to work improving or suggesting improvements in his native city; and in 1794 laid out about ten thousand pounds in the purchase and improvement of a flour-mill, which he worked for the benefit of the inhabitants, and to keep down the price of flour, and in 1800 he threw it open for the poor to come and buy in small quantities at first hand. He found Dane John a mere rough piece of pasture land, laid it out, and left it the agreeable piece of recreation ground which it now is, as a stone pillar on the spot records. The townsmen were not ungrateful; they loyally read the *Kentish Gazette*, they presented him with the thanks of the Corporation and a piece of plate worth fifty pounds; they raised him to the highest municipal offices in their power to bestow, and in 1806 returned him to Parliament as their chosen member.

The pillar on Dane John, Canterbury, has an eccentric stone-brother in the church of St. Mary, Bury St. Edmonds, recording that "Near this place are deposited the remains of Peter Gedge, printer, who established the first newspaper that was ever published in this town. Like a worn-out type he is returned to the founder in the hope of being re-cast in a better and more perfect mould." This unseemly nonsense refers to Peter Gedge, the proprietor and editor of the *Bury and Norwich Post* (which he started July 11th, 1782), who died on the 7th of January, 1818, aged fifty-nine.

Thomas Flindell, the founder, printer, publisher, pro-

prietor and editor of the *Western Luminary*, had worked his way up by sheer sturdy resolution. He was born at Helford, in Cornwall, and apprenticed to a printer, but he at first made so little progress in his trade that, on coming to London to seek work, he could scarcely get through sufficient to give him a subsistence. He, however, persevered and got on, and in 1790 was sent down to conduct the *Doncaster Gazette*. Here he made a fortunate hit; success or ruin were in the balance—he struck at random, and up went the scale with ruin. When the trials of Hardy, Horne Tooke, &c., were stretching the public expectation to its greatest tension, the *Gazette* being ready for publication and the verdict not yet delivered, Flindell boldly anticipated it, and announced that he had just got intelligence that the verdict was "Not Guilty." No other editor in the North daring so great a risk, no other paper published the result of the trial till the next week, so that the *Doncaster Gazette* got a rare character for early information, as well it might. Returning to Helston in his native county, he started as bookseller, and carried on the business for some years; but he was at length induced to go to Falmouth, to start, in conjunction with four or five others, the *Cornwall Gazette and Falmouth Packet*. Here his good luck failed him; his partners became bankrupt, and he was involved to some extent in their ruin. The paper was given up; but, in 1803, some gentlemen of local influence sought him out, and set up by subscription the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* at Truro, which they even appear to have presented to him; for, in 1813, getting weary, it is said, of hebdómadal discussion with a Whig rival, he sold the *Gazette* and removed to Exeter, where he started the *Western Luminary*, on his own Tory principles. These, however, involved him in trouble, for on the 19th of March, 1821, he was sentenced to be imprisoned for eight months in Exeter Gaol for libels on Queen Caroline. This imprisonment so much affected his health that he died from

the effects of it, eighteen months after his release, and on the 11th of July, 1823.

The history of the *Westmoreland Gazette* furnishes us with another instance of genius bursting through the clouds of obscurity, and shining, a local sun, over the district of its birth. An early editor of that paper was John Briggs, who, at the outset of life, followed his father's trade of a basket-maker in the village of Cartmel, in Lancashire, where he was born on the 25th of December, 1788. An innate love of literature won him from his trade, and, for a wonder, he exchanged it for a better when he became an author. In addition to the *Westmoreland Gazette*, he edited the "Lonsdale Magazine," but death pulled him off the ladder he was mounting, and he died prematurely on the 21st November, 1824, at the age of forty-six. "The Remains of John Briggs," published at Kirby Lonsdale, may hand his name down to another generation.

Between these worthies and the higher point on which Montgomery stands alone, there was another class of editors who have furnished some names that must not be passed over in silence in a history of the press. They were not so numerous as the poor, hard-working, self-educated printers, who in the course of years grew rich and men of reference in their localities, but there were still a great many editors on the provincial press of good family, and refined education, and ample means.

One of this kind was Robert Raikes, a son of the founder of the *Gloucester Journal*. This gentleman was born at Gloucester, of a good family, September 14th, 1735, and received a superior education. He made use of the influence of his paper to reform the system of the city and other gaols, and to introduce to the public the system of Sunday schools, of which he was the founder, and the jubilee of which was held upon his birthday. Whilst he remained at Gloucester to edit his journal and do good in his neighbourhood, his brother Thomas came to London to

found a commercial family, and weave his name into the records of the great city. He was a Russian merchant, a director of the Bank of England, and the keeper of that Journal of matters political and historical which has lately been given to the world. Robert Raikes died on the 5th of April, 1811.*

The *Norfolk Chronicle* was for upwards of thirty-five years edited by William Stevenson, the eldest son of the Reverend Seth Ellis Stevenson of East Retford, Nottinghamshire, rector of Traswell. He was a man of great research, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, a frequent correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine," editor of "A Supplement to Bentham's History and Antiquities of the Cathedral of Ely," and a great friend of Nichols, whom he is said to have assisted materially in the "Literary Anecdotes." He died May 13th, 1821.

James Smith, a quaker, who compiled the "Panorama of Science and Art," and "The Mechanic; or, Compendium of Practical Inventions," and who died in 1823 at the age of forty-two, had been editor of the *Liverpool Mercantile Advertiser:* and, in 1810, Francis Jollie, the author of a "Sketch of Cumberland Manners and Customs," "The Cumberland Guide," &c., edited the *Carlisle Journal.* William Mayler, one of the magistrates and senior common councilman of the city of Bath at the time of his death, which took place on the 10th of March, 1821, at the age of sixty-five, was the proprietor and editor of the *Bath Herald.* He was also the author of "Poetical Amusements," published in 1806. Robert Trueman, who died on the 19th of February, 1802, was the projector and founder of the *Exeter Flying Post,* which he conducted with great credit for forty years.

William Cowdroy, the proprietor, editor, and printer of the *Manchester Gazette* at the early part of the present

* Nichols' "Literary Anecdotes," vol. ix. p. 549.

century, is said to have been a rare wit, and to have been very successful in light punning paragraphs which were copied from his paper by all its contemporaries; but the most remarkable fact was that he used to compose his articles in the type without first writing them. He died on the 10th of August, 1814, aged sixty-two.

Cowdroy had a warm and attached friend in Edward Rushton, an editor in the sister town of Liverpool, who only survived him a few months. Rushton was born in John-street, Liverpool, on the 11th of November, 1756. His education, which was furnished by the grammar school of his native town, could have been but slight, for it terminated with his ninth year, and, before he had attained the age of eleven, he was apprenticed to the sea. In his seventeenth year, he was second mate, and in that capacity sailed for the African coast in a slaver; but a fever, breaking out among the live cargo in the hold, communicated itself to Rushton—we must, in justice, add during his endeavours to alleviate the sufferings of the slaves—and he lost one eye, and much of the sight of the other. Unable to follow his profession, he returned to Liverpool, a poor, emaciated, almost blind young man, and his excellent father liberally allowed him four shillings a week for his support; and on this he subsisted for seven years. At the end of that time, his father, to advance the interests of some other member of his family, put him into a tavern, of which he was to take a part of the management; and here he married; but, the business not succeeding, he left it, and was engaged as editor of the *Liverpool Herald.* Here he might have earned a comfortable subsistence, but his impetuous spirit would not brook control, and, fancying his independence clogged, he threw up his appointment, and, with thirty guineas, five children, and a prudent wife, set up in business as a bookseller. Politics then ran high in Liverpool, and he was nearly assassinated on one occasion in the streets, on account of some bold remarks he

had written or published. In 1803 he placed himself under an oculist of rising fame in Manchester, and in 1807, after undergoing five dreadful operations, was restored to the sight of that world which he had so dimly seen for more than thirty years. He wrote several poems, chiefly of a political character; but enjoyed his new delights only seven years, dying on the 22d of November, 1814. One of his sons is Edward Rushton, Esq., barrister-at-law, who in 1826, true to the traditions of his family, helped to establish the *Liverpool Chronicle*, and now, we believe, worthily fills the office of stipendiary magistrate of Liverpool.

During the interval we have gone over, the country papers suffered their share of prosecution. We have already recorded the trial of Drakard of the *Stamford News*, in connexion with the trials of the Hunts and the *Examiner*, and alluded to the punishment of Flindell of the *Western Luminary* for a libel on Queen Caroline. The libel was certainly as gross as could well be conceived. It was, as read by Mr. Wetherall, on her complaint to the House of Commons on July the 24th, 1824, in these words:—"Shall a woman who is as notoriously devoted to Bacchus as to Venus—shall such a woman as would, if found on our pavement, be committed to Bridewell and whipped, be held up in the light of suffering innocence?" The coarse brutality of the libel brought down upon its author the speedy reprobation of the House of Commons, and a prosecution, by its orders, by the Attorney-General.

The *Manchester Observer*, started on the 3d of January, 1818, was continually in trouble. In the course of four months of the year 1819, James Wroe, the then proprietor, had no less than thirteen processes against him for libels; but his imprisonment put no stop to the evil, and on the 22d of September, Mrs. Wroe and a shop-boy were taken into custody in the shop for selling the paper. Much virtuous indignation was thrown away about Mrs. Wroe being dragged through the streets with a child at the breast

only five months old, but she was discharged on two persons becoming bail for her for fifty pounds each. The sympathies of many people at this time were reserved for the seditious who were "bold writers," the hardened who were "brave," the obstinate who were "resolute," the licentious who were "unfettered." The rights of society —the sanctity of private and domestic life—the claims of law and order, were disregarded, as is usual when these exaggerated wind-bags inscribed with the sadly abused name of Freedom are floating before men's disordered vision and making the brain giddy.

The press knew how to take care of itself occasionally, and not always depended only upon the expertness of argument, the readiness of retort, or the keenness of sarcasm as its weapons of defence; but when a scion of a noble house chose to adopt a physical line of reply to its comments, disdaining a rejoinder of the same ruffian kind, it turned to those laws which had favoured it none too much, and claimed protection. It received it. Colonel Fitzhardinge Berkeley, afterwards Lord Seagrave, thought proper to take offence at some remarks which appeared in the *Cheltenham Chronicle*, and, seeking out the editor, Mr. Judge, committed a violent assault upon him. For this Mr. Judge brought an action against the Colonel at Hereford Assizes, and obtained five hundred pounds damages. Even a Berkeley, on his own hereditary soil, was no longer allowed the elegant gratification of beating a mere country editor.

Time was when he could, of his own free will and pleasure, have had him whipped through the town, or stuck in the pillory, for daring to print a newspaper at all; but we have arrived at the year of grace eighteen hundred and twenty-five, and the press—provincial as well as metropolitan—is one of the institutions of the land.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCOTTISH PRESS—DUGALD STEWART—JAMES SIBBALD—JAMES CHALMERS—MACDIARMID—THE "BEACON"—ITS VIOLENCE DEPRECATED BY SCOTT—IT ATTACKS MR. JAMES STUART—HOSTILE COLLISIONS AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS—THE "BEACON" GOES OUT—SIR WALTER SCOTT STANDS ALOOF—BUT THE "GLASGOW SENTINEL" SPRINGS UP—AYTON EDITS IT—AND SIR ALEXANDER BOSWELL WRITES IN IT—JAMES STUART CALLS HIM OUT—THEY FIGHT, AND BOSWELL FALLS—A MISERABLE QUARREL—THE "SCOTSMAN"—J. R. MCCULLOCH—TRITONS AND MINNOWS—STATISTICS OF THE SCOTTISH PRESS—ITS LIMITS—THE IRISH PRESS—IN AN UNHEALTHY STATE—ITS SLOVENLY APPEARANCE—BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION, OR PERSECUTION AND OPPRESSION—THE PILLORY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—COSTLY ADVERTISEMENTS AND FAVOURED PAPERS—A STIR ABOUT IT—THE GOVERNMENT SET UP THE "PATRIOT" AGAINST THE "CORRESPONDENT"—THE "CORRESPONDENT" SUBSIDISED—THE CLERKS OF THE ROADS AND THEIR TRICKS—THE PRESSURE OF THE ADVERTISEMENT DUTY—SEVERE SENTENCE AGAINST THE "DUBLIN EVENING POST"—CONDUCT OF LORD CLONMEL—STATISTICS OF THE IRISH PRESS.

Two names of eminence are connected with the history of the Scottish press during the first quarter of the century—those of Dugald Stewart and Sir Walter Scott. The relation of the former was of little more than an official kind. It arose out of the patronage of the Whigs, who, on their accession to office in 1806, created for their adherent a new office called "Printer of the *Edinburgh Gazette*," carrying a salary of three hundred pounds a-year and some emoluments arising out of the sale of the paper.* The connexion of the latter was of a more intimate and a more disastrous kind. But there are a few minor worthies whose names are identified with it; whose

* Lord Cockburn's Memorials of his Time.

industry helped to pile it up; whose talent helped to embellish it, and whose honour and probity shed upon it the light by which we are enabled to see it to advantage; and whose career it is first our duty to glance at.

Of these, one whose virtues and benevolence may be allowed to blind us to a few little eccentricities and foibles was James Sibbald, the son of a farmer at Whitlow, near Selkirk, Roxburghshire, where he was born in 1747. Sibbald followed his father's occupation for thirty-two years, till the American Revolution having sadly depressed the business of farming, he, in 1779, disposed of his stock, and with a hundred pounds in his pocket went up to Edinburgh to seek a living. Guided by literary tastes, this man, who had for more than thirty years followed the plough, seeking inspiration from the soil, lifted his head, and volunteered into the ranks of literature. He served in the lowest rank at first, giving his time as shopman to a former neighbour, whom he found established in Edinburgh as a bookseller—Charles Elliot. In 1780, he purchased the circulating library which had been formed by Allan Ramsay, and started on his own account in the trade he had adopted. But, soaring above the mere mercantile part of the trade, he aspired to write, instead of contenting himself with the more profitable, if less glorious, work of selling: and, relinquishing his bookselling in 1791, he started and edited the *Edinburgh Herald.* From this once longed-for height, he saw a brighter, higher still, and, chafed and goaded by a restless ambition, mounted a hobby and rode into London. Here his hopes were disappointed; the industrious, sensible Scotch editor had to compete with men who possessed more subtle qualities, and a more refined education; his eccentric and convivial habits did not help to advance his interests; and, in the metropolis of the world, poor Sibbald was lost in obscurity. Yet he applied not for assistance to his friends. Either his native independence or his sanguine disposition prevented his

writing any repining letters to his family, and for some time nothing was heard of him or his fortunes. At length his brother got a clue to him, and wrote to inquire how he got on. There is something almost touching in the forced cheerfulness with which he replies; the sound which comes back at last into the old home is the voice of one lost in the wilderness: "My lodging is in Soho, and my business is so-so." The ring of the laugh is jarring and betrays the counterfeit. His hopes broken to fragments, he was induced to return to Edinburgh, where he wrote, and edited, and compiled, till April, 1803, when death carried off this farmer-editor to his store.

James Chalmers, a fellow-workman with Benjamin Franklin in the printing-office of Watts in London, and a man well skilled in the learned languages, had retraced his way northwards in 1740, and at the close of the Rebellion, during which he had been a sufferer for his attachment to the Hanoverian cause, set up the *Aberdeen Journal* in 1746. A son had been born to him in March, 1742, and when he grew to be a lad, the anxious self-taught father sought to give him an education which should bear him successfully through the world. After completing his term at Mareschal College, in his native city, young Chalmers was sent to London and to Cambridge, to improve himself in his father's business, and, on his father's death in September, 1764, he found himself editor, printer and proprietor of the *Aberdeen Journal*. He was a man of erudition and learning, and edited his paper successfully for a period of six-and-forty years. He had married in 1769, and had ten children at the time of his death on the 17th of June, 1810.

The name of the *Dumfries Courier*, a paper started in 1810, is exalted by the accession in 1818 of McDiarmid as editor and part proprietor; and the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* gave a place, in 1821, to some political lucubrations of Sir Walter Scott, under the head of "The

Visionary," and on the subject of parliamentary reform, which, we believe, were more graceful than convincing.

It would have been better for Sir Walter Scott's peace of mind, if not for his reputation, if his political essays had been confined to these harmless effusions, but the ardent sincerity of his disposition led him into a political combination, which brought him nothing but pain and unpleasantness.

The Scotch Tories, being alarmed at the spread of extreme liberal opinions during the progress of the Queen's trial, had copied the tactics of their party in London, and set up a paper in the northern metropolis, which excelled in violence and recklessness the *John Bull*. But while their southern allies judiciously screened the hand that pulled the trigger, the more zealous Scots disdained to wear the mask, and stood confessed before the world as the aiders and abettors of the most violent party writings and the most unscrupulous personal attacks. This was not approved by Scott, but his advice was disregarded and his opinion over-ruled by the majority of his coadjutors; and the result was ruin, disgrace, and death.

In January, 1821, a paper was started in Edinburgh, called the *Beacon*, the funds for which were openly and avowedly contributed by persons belonging to, or in connexion with, the Government. Among them were Sir William Rae, the Lord Advocate; Jones Wedderburne, Solicitor-General; John Hay Forbes, Sheriff-depute, Perth; John Hope, Advocate-depute; Arbuthnot, Lord Provost of Edinburgh; W. Home Drummond, M.P. for Stirling, and Advocate-depute; and Sir Walter Scott, then Clerk to the Court of Session, and Sheriff-depute for Selkirkshire. The editorship was, it is said, offered to James Ballantyne, who declined it, and it then fell into a sort of commission, composed of young hands and hot heads. They offered boldly to give up to any one feeling himself aggrieved the name of the writer of the article

which had offended him, and hinted significantly at their readiness to give "full satisfaction" to those who might feel or fancy their honour wounded. This mischievous and dangerous avowal gave them impunity for a time, and elevated them into a frenzy of unbridled licence. Sir Walter Scott looked on with pain and dismay at the conflict he had been instrumental in raising; but his voice of warning, of remonstrance, of entreaty, was lost in the din—he had been one of the number who had signed a bond to the bankers for raising the supplies for the war, and that bond he could not cancel; but, when he saw the manner in which the battle was being fought, he stood aloof, and, it is said, in disgust, he even refused to look at the paper.* There were, however, not wanting those who believed, or affected to believe, that Scott was taking an active part in its management; nothing could be more repugnant to the estimate that has long been formed of his character than such a supposition as this. If he deplored the violence, how much more must he have regretted the acrimony of the language held by the *Beacon;* if he stood appalled at the headstrong rush of its political course, how must he have been agonised by its stabs at those amongst whom he must, in spite of their politics, have numbered some friends! It was in vain that he had raised his voice—he could now only remain silent and sad. In a letter to John Wilson Croker, he says: "I endeavoured in vain to impress on them the necessity of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion—one of those 'gentlemen of the press' who understand the exact length to which they can go in their vocation." But this prudent course was not pursued; and the course of scurrility, personality, and slander went wildly on. It led to litigation and some painful collisions. Mr. James Stuart, a leading Edinburgh Whig, was particularly singled out for attack, and was at

* Lockhart's "Life of Scott," chap. liv. 1821.

last goaded to an assault upon Stephenson the publisher; this Stephenson resented with a challenge to mortal combat, which, being disregarded by Stuart, was published by the *Beacon* in a charge of cowardice. For this libel Stuart brought an action in October, 1821; but Stephenson was already ostensibly removed from the publication, and his place supplied by R. Alexander and W. M. Borthwick, who are the nominal defendants. In this affair Borthwick was instrumental in getting at some information which was used by the prosecutor, and it was asserted that, being suspected in consequence as a traitor, he was dealt with in a harsh and illegal manner with the complicity of the Lord Advocate. Charged with stealing the paper containing the information from the office, he was seized at Dundee, put into manacles, and, guarded by two men with pistols, was brought to Glasgow. The whole conduct of the Lord Advocate in this matter was brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Abercrombie (the late Speaker, and afterwards Lord Dunfermline), on the 25th of June, 1822, but his motion for a committee to enquire into it, supported by Mackintosh, and opposed by the Marquis of Londonderry (Lord Castlereagh) and "Mr. Secretary" (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel, was lost by a majority of 120 over 95 votes.* On the 3d of June, 1823, Abercrombie again brought the subject forward, but his motion for an enquiry was then negatived by 102 votes against 96.† The *Beacon* was violently extinguished in August, 1821, and thus a career, conceived in error, brought forth in blundering and indecision, carried on in violence, more distinguished by a fierceness amounting almost to ruffianism than by brilliancy or talent, ended in shame and ruin. Would that it had acted as an example—that this unfortunate paper had been indeed a beacon to warn its partisans off the dangerous rock on which it had split. A life

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. vii. 1822, pp. 1323-71.

† Ibid. vol. ix. 1823, pp. 665-90.

might have been spared—a crime less might have been committed. But the angry passions that had been excited would not cool easily—they only sought another field and went to work with new weapons. But Sir Walter Scott is no longer in the scene of strife. Grieved to the heart, and not wholly acquitting himself perhaps from blame, he has withdrawn from contests which neither suited his temperament or tastes.

An obscure paper had been published at Hamilton, called the *Clydesdale Journal*, which, in 1821, was transferred to Glasgow, and called the *Glasgow Sentinel*. This was the paper now selected by the Tories as a favourable organ for counteracting the Radical opinions which were afloat, and the current of which was still setting northwards. No pains were taken to conceal the partiality of the authorities: Ayton, then the Sheriff-substitute of Lanark, was understood to be the editor or principal writer, and to a circular which was sent round, recommending the paper to the support of its party, was appended, amongst others, the signature of the Lord Advocate. The *Sentinel* attacked with the greatest virulence and acrimony all the opponents of the Government, and particularly assailed the Hamilton family. It also took up the quarrels of the *Beacon*, and lampooned, with more coarseness than wit, the Mr. Stuart who had been the victim of the Edinburgh paper. A quarrel among the editors disclosed the authorship of one of these lampoons, and fixed it on Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleek, to whom Mr. Stuart immediately sent a hostile message. The result was the duel, in which, as Mr. Lockhart says, "the Baronet fell in as miserable a quarrel as ever cost the blood of a high-spirited gentleman," and the trial and acquittal of Stuart for murder. The Lord Advocate's connexion with this paper was also traced, and reviewed, and warmly commented upon during the discussion on Mr. Abercrombie's motion; but Sir William Rae, while he admitted having subscribed a hundred

pounds towards the *Beacon*, repudiated all connexion with the *Sentinel* beyond the recommendation to which he had affixed his name. Taking him at his word, he must be judged guilty of great indiscretion and want of taste—of a line of conduct which strikes at the very foundation of that security which we feel in our laws, by exhibiting a judge in the uniform of a partisan.

The leading journal of Scotland was the *Scotsman*, an Edinburgh paper started in 1817, and of which Mr. J. R. McCulloch, the shrewd Galloway statistician, who is esteemed the first political economist of the age, was, when a youngster of eighteen, the editor. The paper was started by Charles Maclaren, one of Scotland's self-taught heroes, who have rallied round the banner of the modern Athens, and won for it its literary fame. He was born in 1785; and in 1817, when filling a subordinate situation in the excise, pondered, perhaps in his rides, upon the scheme of a new paper, and in conjunction with Mr. William Ritchie, brought out the *Scotsman*. For the first four months of its existence Maclaren acted as editor, but, deeming it unsafe to be the open writer of a liberal paper whilst holding a Government situation, he transferred the management to McCulloch, who edited the paper for two years, when the founder returned to the charge of his offspring, and continued to edit it until 1847, when ill-health compelled him again to retire. He still, however, gave it the occasional benefit of an article from his pen.

Among newspaper writers of minor fame, or mere local celebrity, we may just stop to inscribe upon our list the names of Peter Wilson, who founded the *Ayr Advertiser* in 1802; a self-taught genius, named Bennet, the editor of the *Glasgow Free Press;* and Watt, for many years the able editor of the *Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin Review.**

We have nothing more to record of the personal history

* Chambers' "Edinburgh Journal," July 19th, 1834.

of the Scottish press during the first quarter of the present century; its statistical history shows a steady though gradual increase. Below we give the amount of duty paid by the newspapers published in Scotland during the period we have just reviewed:*—

Year.	Amount of Duty.	Scale of Duty.
1801	£14,499	
1802	14,113	
1803	15,461	
1804	16,865	
1805	17,094	
1806	19,158	
1807	19,501	3½*d.* for every sheet not exceeding 32 inches in length and 22 inches in breadth.
1808	19,598	
1809	20,445	
1810	21,288	
1811	21,054	
1812	22,948	
1813	21,921	
1814	20,158	
1815	20,281	
1816	16,612	
1817	14,180	
1818	17,481	
1819	19,060	
1820	20,609	4*d.* for every sheet of the above dimensions.
1821	19,373	
1822	20,387	
1823	20,795	
1824	22,387	
1825	24,419	

The drop from 20,281 in 1815, to 16,612 in 1816, followed in 1817 by a farther fall to 14,180—a falling off of nearly one-third of the annual amount of duty in two years—affords a striking proof of the effects of the addition of even a single halfpenny, which will not be overlooked by the political economist.

The rate at which the Scottish newspapers increased is scarcely the index we might have expected to find it of the national intelligence. In 1782, there had only been

* Oliver and Boyd's "Edinburgh Almanack," 1858.

eight newspapers printed in Scotland; in 1792, six had been added to the number; and in 1795, one of the fourteen had been lost. But in 1809, there were twenty-four; in 1815, twenty-six; and in 1821, thirty-one. These were of course thicker in the southern counties, and got more scarce the further you progressed northward—the extremest point at which the press had been planted was Inverness, where the *Inverness Journal* was established in 1807, and the *Inverness Courier* on December 4th, 1817. The islands never possessed a paper, and it is sad to speculate upon the probability of their intelligence ever drawing to them such a warming beam of civilisation.

The history of the Irish newspapers during the period which we have just gone over presents few features of interest. The press was not in a healthy state. Scarcely purified of the revolutionary blood of 1798—suspected and watched with jealousy by the Government—an unintelligible marvel in the eyes of the many, and an engine of mischief in the hands of a few; it had neither inducements nor power to elevate itself. Even its outward appearance indicated poverty, helplessness, and sloth. The sheet on which the newspaper was printed was usually much smaller than the English or Scotch journals—the paper thinner—the type larger and coarser—the ink browner—the typographical errors infinitely more frequent and more glaring. Internally it betrayed evidences of starvation; the subjects of discussion chosen without judgment, and treated without talent—the style bad—the reasoning false—the language by turns coarse or feeble. The very news was stale and meagre; the advertisements few, for who would address in print a population which could not read?

The papers that existed under these dark clouds, and in this ungenial atmosphere, struggled for very life against the combination of difficulties that beset them. The avenging blow was quick and often mortal that followed a

libel in their columns; the bribing hand was always held out to buy their support, to corrupt their principles, or to seduce them from their duty; the secret service of the Post-office was set into action to impede their advance, and to compass their ruin; the advertisement duty was doubled upon them and increased to oppression.

No power less consistently than the press could adopt the motto "*Frangas, non flectas.*" The iron heel of despotism treads it down but for a minute—it is elastic again, and springs up leaving no trace of the footprint which was upon it. The storm of revolution, the whirlwind of convulsions pass over it; it but bends its head to the blast and is erect again. The insidious hand sows choking weeds among it, but it grows up nourished from the purity of its root, and destroys the corruption which was intended to poison it. Even in the stunted and deformed press of Ireland—weakened moreover as it was by intestine festerings—this principle of vitality was discernible. Bleeding from the most murderous wounds that could be inflicted upon it—prostrated by its own suicidal attempts, or fearfully mangled by rushing in its blind impetuosity and violence against obstacles and obstructions, it yet never died. Years after it had ceased to be the custom of English law courts to exalt the news-printer in the cage of punishment for a mob to pelt and laugh at, the printer of the *Dublin Morning Post* had, on the 26th of June, 1790, been put in the pillory on College Green, for copying a paragraph from the London papers, stating that "The ——" ('meaning the Queen,' as the Attorney-General, no doubt, correctly interpreted it) "was formerly a very domestic woman, but now gives up too much of her time to politics."

But such violences as this were not nearly so dangerous to the press as the more subtle and destructive agency of gold. In 1805, among the votes of money by Parliament for the use of Government was a sum of £7,056 for advertisements in the *Dublin Gazette*. This amount went on

annually increasing, till, in 1812, it was £10,205 12*s.* "for advertisements in the *Dublin Gazette* and other papers," and had even been as high as £17,000. The attention of Parliament was then attracted to it by Sir John Newport, who, on the 29th of April, 1812, moved for an account of its expenditure, and broadly asserted that it was not distributed impartially, but given among favoured journals to gain or keep their support to Government measures. Wellesley Pole, then Secretary for Ireland, denied the allegation, but Mr. Parnell asserted (on what authority we do not know), that "the Duke of Wellington, when Irish Secretary, had candidly admitted that the proclamations were given to certain papers as a reward for advocating the measures of Government." * Years afterwards Mr. Hume raised his voice against this monstrous grant, and, to show its misapplication, mentioned papers of insignificant circulation which received the Government advertisements, whilst those which were read largely were deprived of them, if differing from the Government views. And the best excuse that the Government could make was that certain papers had always received them—that the *Dublin Journal*, for instance, had had them for fifty years,—or, as Mr. Goulburn, when Irish Secretary, replied exultingly, that *Saunders' News Letter*, which *was* a paper of large circulation, regularly had them. It was the exception which proved the rule. Generally speaking, the papers which circulated most extensively because adopting the popular views, were denied the Government patronage; whilst those which were ministerial and unpopular (two words which usually go together in Ireland), with a circulation of a few hundreds only, were the favoured organs. The excuse that they had always had them was a childish one: the history of the newspaper press shows us a scarcely-failing rule, that an existence of half a century reduces the largest circulation

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xxii. 1812, p. 1114.

to very narrow limits, or multiplies the smallest by hundreds. It was, therefore, most probable that the journals which *might* have been selected in 1760 by the Government of the day as the most likely to give a wide circulation to its notices, were the very ones, in 1810, in which they would be the most completely buried from the public view. We cannot divest ourselves of the impression that this large grant *was* made use of as a bribe and a reward, nor can we wonder at a Government so using the golden talisman which the House of Commons put into its hands. Who so deserving of reward from its bounty as those who had sung its praises and propped its fortunes? The actual sufferers—in independence and character—were the newspapers.

For instance: a paper of influence, called the *Correspondent*, had long existed in Dublin; but, as it opposed the views of Government, Wellesley Pole, while Irish Secretary, set up a paper called the *Patriot*, to which, in one year, twelve hundred pounds worth of official advertisements were given. The ring of the gold was musical—the bait, unconcealed and undisguised, was swallowed—and the *Correspondent* caught. It turned completely round, adopted ministerial views, and, next year, got seven or eight hundred pounds of the advertisement grant. Even the insertion of news, such as the Government wanted to make known, was paid for, and we find, in 1819, one Dublin paper charging £519 for inserting news from the *London Gazette* for one year.

Attracted from the path of duty by these golden apples which were hung upon the trees, the press could produce only a few papers which marched straight forward with a lofty disregard of them; and those few which did so found an obstacle raised at every step, and barriers put up across the road. The monopoly of circulating newspapers by the post had been held fast by the clerks of the road, employed by the Post-office, who pocketed the charges as their per-

quisites. These, as at a former time in England, became so exorbitant, that the newspaper proprietors were obliged to lift up their voices against the extortion, and an arrangement was come to by most of them to procure the frank of a Member of Parliament, which, if printed on the cover of the paper, carried it free through the post. But the clerks of the road would not so easily yield their profitable privilege, and, baffled only for a moment, boldly charged the postage upon franked papers, raising, when the charge was disputed, a question of the validity of the frank, or a doubt of the consent of the Member to its use. But as this was a direct infringement of the privileges of the House of Commons, it was warmly complained of on the 28th of May, 1810, and the ministers promised that the clerks of the road should be taught their duty.

Another millstone which was hung round the neck of the Irish press to keep it down was the advertisement duty, which was excessive. In 1811, the duty, which had been one shilling for every ten lines, was doubled; and the discount, which in England was about seventeen per cent., restricted to one and a half per cent. Under Foster's Act, which made these changes, the duty after the first ten lines was increased, and doubled on every subsequent ten lines, and there were other curious arrangements, amongst which the lines were to be reckoned of the length of twenty m's of long primer type. It was thus calculated that an advertisement which in England would only pay three shillings duty, would in Ireland pay two pounds fourteen shillings; and that an advertisement of three hundred lines would be charged three pounds for duty. The expectations of the supporters of the Act had been disappointed—the doubling of the rate of duty had not been attended with a doubling of the revenue derived from it. Although two new papers had been established, the duty, which from January 8th, 1810, to March 31st, had amounted to £2,137 7*s.* 6*d.* paid by Dublin papers alone, from March

31st to June 30th, to £2,022 7*s.* 6*d.*, and from June 30th to September 30th, to £2,075 6*s.* 8*d.*, was in the quarter from September 30th, 1810, to January 5th, 1811,—the first of the new regulations—only £2,755 11*s.* 2*d.* Here, then, without taking into consideration the effect which the addition of two new papers should have had, was a serious falling off in advertisements. The *rate* of duty was doubled and the *amount* not increased by one-third.

Against this serious injury the proprietors of the Irish papers petitioned the House of Commons on the 8th of May, 1811, and, on the 16th, Mr. Shaw moved the consideration of their case; but, although supported by Mr. Grattan, the motion was lost on a division of 29 against 17. On the 24th of May, Sir John Newport, recurring to the subject, proposed the repeal of the oppressive Act, and Sheridan exposed the hardship which it entailed, but the House would grant no relief, and rejected the motion by 29 votes to 17.

We thus find the Irish press only disembarrassed of one of its obstructing influences—the rapacity of the clerks of the roads—up till 1812: the severity of the laws and the jealousy of the Government had relaxed in no degree since the printers of the *Dublin Morning Post* stood in the pillory for a libel on the Queen. In December, 1813, John Magee, the editor of the *Dublin Evening Post*, was prosecuted and convicted of a libel on the Duke of Richmond, then Lord Lieutenant, and sentenced to be imprisoned for two years in Newgate, to pay a fine of five hundred pounds, and to find two securities for his good behaviour for seven years in five hundred pounds each, and give bond himself in a thousand pounds. The conduct of Lord Clonmell, the judge before whom he was tried, was strongly deprecated and considered partial, and Mr. Ponsonby moved for an inquiry by the House of Commons, but it was refused. In the next year, before his term of imprisonment had expired, Magee was again prosecuted for publishing the

Kilkenny Catholic Resolutions, and sentenced to a further imprisonment of six months in Newgate, to pay a fine of a thousand pounds, and to give security for his good behaviour, himself in a thousand pounds and two sureties in five hundred pounds each. We may easily conjecture that the *Dublin Evening Post* was not among the papers that participated in the annual advertisement grant.

The number of newspapers published throughout Ireland had not stood still. Only three in 1782, it was in 1790 twenty-seven; in 1795, thirty-five; in 1809, thirty-seven; in 1815, forty-nine; in 1821, fifty-six. We have no return of the number at which it stood in 1825, but it was only sixty, five years afterwards.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR COLONIAL PRESS—THE PRESS IN INDIA—"HICKING'S GAZETTE"—THE "BENGAL HURKURU" ESTABLISHED—THE MARQUIS OF WELLESLEY'S REGULATIONS—MR. MILL ON THE EARLY PRESS OF INDIA—THE MARQUIS OF HASTINGS' REGULATIONS—MR. MILL'S OPINION OF THEM—THE NEWSPAPER-READING CLASSES OF INDIA—MR. ADAM'S REGULATIONS—SANCTIONED BY LORD AMHERST—JAMES SILK BUCKINGHAM AND HIS GRIEVANCES—CEYLON FIRST JOURNALISED—ENGLISH PAPERS IN STRANGE PLACES—A NATIVE INDIAN PRESS AND A NEWSPAPER IN BENGALEE—OUR AUSTRALIAN PRESS—ITS HUMBLE ORIGIN—HOWE THE CREOLE—HIS EPITAPH—LIBERTY OF THE PRESS PROCLAIMED IN SYDNEY—SIR THOMAS BRISBANE—COMPETITION—THE PRESS IN BERBICE—AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE—IN NEWFOUNDLAND—AN ENGLISH "GAZETTE" AT MONTE VIDEO—A NEWSPAPER IN THE SNOW AND ICE—THE PRESS COVERING THE GLOBE.

WHEN we last inspected the outposts of the British press, it will be remembered that our survey extended only to America. If they were all given up and lost to its dominion, it had in the interval pushed its influence into a wider sphere, and planted its intelligence and freedom in new soils and vaster continents. Lopped of some of its branches in the New World, it had struck out its shoots in a newer world, and in the extensive regions of Australia the year 1825 saw the British press flourishing.

But we must first, and before we endeavour to take a comprehensive glance of the growth of our colonial press, witness its languishing in India. In a country placed in such an anomalous position by the paucity of European inhabitants, and the fanaticism and prejudices of a vast native population of conflicting feelings and antagonistic religions, it would have been dangerous to allow the press its full latitude at once. Its feeble birth and languid infancy

did not at first call for any measures of restraint. Calcutta seems to have been the place where it first drew breath; and *Hicking's Gazette,* started on the 29th of January, 1781, the first offspring of the Indian press. On the 4th of March, 1784, the Government ushered into existence a small official sheet called the *Calcutta Gazette, or Oriental Advertiser;* and in January, 1795, the *Bengal Hurkuru* (the native word for Messenger) made its appearance, and is at the present time the oldest paper published in India, as well as the first daily paper, it having assumed that character on the 29th of April, 1819. The Government soon became awakened to the danger of allowing entirely unrestrained comments to go forth among the jealous natives; and, in 1799, the Marquis of Wellesley, then Governor-General, drew up the following regulations of the newspaper press:—

First. Every printer of a newspaper to print his name at the bottom of the paper.

Second. Every editor and proprietor of a paper to deliver in his name and place of abode to the Secretary to Government.

Third. No paper to be published on a Sunday.

Fourth. No paper to be published at all until it shall have been previously inspected by the Secretary to the Government, or by a person authorised by him for that purpose.

Fifth. The penalty for offending against any of the above regulations to be immediate embarkation for Europe.

The legality of the last regulation was called in question by Judge Sullivan of the Indian Bench, but the Governor-General justified it by the plea that, inasmuch as no individual could at that time reside in India, unless he was in the Company's service, without having a licence from the East India Company, the revocation of its licence or dismissal from its service were the prerogatives of the Company, and could be put in force at any time, and against

any individual of whose conduct they had reason to complain. The regulations were, however, brought to the notice of the House of Commons on March the 21st, 1811, by Lord Claud Hamilton; and there appears then to have been further conditions laid down for the Secretary to Government, who, under the fourth regulation, had to inspect every paper previous to publication, but was now instructed "to prevent all observations in papers respecting the public revenues and finances of the country, all observations respecting the embarkations on board ship of stores, or expeditions, and their destinations, whether they belonged to the Company or to Europe; all statements of the probability of war or peace between the Company and native powers; all observations tending to convey information to the enemy, and the republication of paragraphs from the European papers which may tend to affect the influence or credit of the British power with the native states."

These regulations were so capable of being read in different ways, that they could, it is obvious, have been made use of to prevent the publication of any kind of intelligence or argument; but, without entering into the question of their policy or justice, the motion which Lord Claud Hamilton made on the subject was restricted to an inquiry into the authority by which they were enforced. His motion was, however, successfully opposed by 53 votes to 38.*

Even the supporters of the motion betray great doubts and misgivings as to the amount of liberty to be accorded to the Indian press, and all concur that it would be dangerous to leave it wholly unrestrained. The experiment had been tried and failed. Speaking of the press prior to the interference of the Marquis of Wellesley, the historian of India says, "In the early portion of its career,

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xix. 1811, pp. 462-77.

the Indian press had been left to follow its own courses, with no other check than that which the law of libel imposed. The character of the papers of early days sufficiently shows that the indulgence was abused, and that, while they were useless as vehicles of local information of any value, they were filled with indecorous attacks upon private life and ignorant censures of public measures. To repress," he continues, "*this great nuisance*, the Marquis of Wellesley's regulations were framed."*

But on the accession of the Marquis of Hastings as Governor-General these regulations were repealed; and, in 1818, the following, which were considered lighter and juster conditions, were adopted:—

"The editors of newspapers are prohibited from publishing any matters coming under the following heads, viz.:—

"First. Animadversions on the measures and proceedings of the Honourable Court of Directors or other public authorities in England connected with the Government of India; or disquisitions on political transactions of the local administration; or offensive remarks levelled at the public conduct of the members of the Council, or the judges of the Supreme Court, or of the Lord Bishop of Calcutta.

"Second. Discussions having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population of any intended interference with their religious opinions or observances.

"Third. The republication from English or other newspapers of passages coming under any of the above heads, or otherwise calculated to affect the British power or reputation in India.

"Fourth. Private scandal and personal remarks on individuals tending to excite dissension in society."

In promulgating these regulations, the Marquis of

* Mill's "History of British India," with notes by Wilson, 4th edition, 1846, vol. viii. p. 581.

Hastings takes credit to himself for developing in India the liberty of the press, and justifies what were then considered great, almost dangerous relaxations in its favour, on the ground of "the salutary control which public scrutiny exercises over supreme authority, and the cheerfulness and zeal with which all ranks of society co-operate in measures the motives and objects of which they understand."* Mr. Mill, whom we must listen to with respect as an authority of weight, considers these views to have been fallacious, and that the noble and liberal-minded Marquis was mistaken in trusting to any good arising out of an unrestrained press in India. Speaking of Lord Hastings' expression in the speech we have already quoted, Mr. Mill says, "This scrutiny and this concurrence, however, were wholly at variance with the circumstances of society in India, the bulk of which was formed of the salaried servants of the Government, already bound by their engagements to furnish it with information and to execute its commands. The remainder of the Indian public consisted of a very few merchants, traders, and artisans, residing in India upon sufferance, having no acknowledged place in the constitution of the Government —no voice in its proceedings—no permanent stake in the welfare of the country, and little, if any, knowledge of its condition or relations. Much benefit could not be anticipated from the comments of a few hundred persons of this description administered through conductors of journals, who were either public servants themselves or were dependent for their privilege of dwelling in India upon the pleasure of the superior powers; the whole forming a body of no weight or influence, and in no essential point corresponding with a public such as the term denoted in the parent country." †

* Answer to an Address presented by the inhabitants of Madras, 24th July, 1819.

† Mill's "History of British India," vol. viii. p. 583.

Without this explanation, the terms of the regulations would appear sufficiently rigorous—nay, with such embargoes on it, it is difficult to conceive what information *was* open to the Indian press; yet these were the mildest rules by which it had been governed, and it was soon to be subjected to vastly more severe ones, which were also, for the first time, to apply to newspapers published by natives.

On the 14th of March, 1823, Mr. Adam, the senior member of council, who, on the resignation of the Marquis of Hastings and pending the arrival of his successor, was administering the Government, promulgated a new code and a rigorous return to the censorship—giving the Government the summary power of prohibiting certain papers, and of licensing, or withholding, or cancelling the licences of printing presses. This despotic Scot had been a censor of the press under the government of the Marquis of Wellesley—a post which was not likely to make him, as acting-governor, very indulgent to the newspapers; but his restrictive regulations were allowed to remain after the arrival of the new Governor-General, and Lord Amherst not only sanctioned them, but frequently put them in force.

It was from these regulations that the late Mr. James Silk Buckingham derived his capital of grievances on which he lived so many years. An impracticable youth, he had chosen the sea as a profession, and, after knocking about as a sailor for some years, he at last got a licence to live in Calcutta, and, in the year 1818, bought the plant and copyright of two of the newspapers published in that city for a sum of three thousand pounds, and amalgamated them under the title of the *Calcutta Journal.* In one of those statements of his losses with which Mr. Buckingham so often favoured the public, he alleges that by the year 1823 he had laid out twenty thousand pounds over and above the purchase-money, and made his journal a property producing eight thousand pounds per annum, and

worth forty thousand pounds. It was the year of Mr. Adam's sway. And among his appointments was the rather singular one of a fellow-countryman, the Rev. Dr. Bryce, who was the head of the Presbyterian Church in India, to the post of clerk for supplying the Government with stationery—a disposal of patronage which the Court of Directors afterwards disapproved of and cancelled. But, however improper the appointment, it was not compatible with Mr. Adam's notions of the functions of the press that any newspaper writer should question it: Mr. Buckingham, unfortunately for himself, did not take the same views, and published some strictures in his paper upon the reverend stationer's appointment. Mr. Adam's reply was the annulling of Buckingham's licence, and an order that he should quit India within two months, under pain of being seized and sent over to England as a prisoner, if found in the country after the expiration of that period. Two months to dispose of a newspaper like the *Calcutta Journal* in a country like India—to dispose of any further property he might possess, or make arrangements for its management during his absence—and to prepare for an unexpected voyage to London, then a very formidable affair! It was impossible; so Buckingham left his paper in the hands of a Mr. Arnot, where he considered it safe, as that gentleman was a native; but Mr. Adam, determined to meet the case, issued the new regulations we have alluded to, extending their application to natives. On the arrival of Lord Amherst, and on these arbitrary rules, Arnot was arrested and imprisoned in a military fortress. Appealing to the Supreme Court against his seizure, he was discharged, on the judge declaring it illegal; but, having gone to the French settlement of Chundernagore, he was seized again by the Company's agents in the very presence of the French Government, and summarily shipped off to Bencoolen; and thus the suppression of the *Calcutta Journal* was completely effected,

and it wanted not the order of the Governor, which was issued in November, to suppress it.*

Shortly afterwards the Governor-General magnanimously offered to grant a licence for its renewal on condition that one of his own officers should be the editor. His Excellency's surgeon was at first proposed to fill the office, but it being thought that he, perhaps, might not be sufficiently under control, a Dr. Mostyn, son-in-law of one of the members of council, was made editor of a revived *Calcutta Journal*, under the title, we believe, of *The Scotchman in the East*, with a salary of a thousand a-year, and Buckingham's late house to live in. The *John Bull*, a paper which had been set up by the Secretary of the Government (and in which Adam had been suspected of assisting) for the special opposition of the *Journal*, was then discontinued, and thus was Buckingham's paper coolly appropriated by and transferred into the hands of the Government. Against so glaring an act of confiscation, Mr. Buckingham appealed to the Privy Council, and among the counsel employed to resist his demand for an enquiry, on the part of the Company, was the *quondam* occasional editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, Serjeant Spankie. The Company pleaded that the regulations were necessary for the safety of their Indian Empire, and Buckingham's petition was rejected after a long argument and consideration. It was some years after that an annuity of a hundred pounds a-year was given to him by the Government.

Whilst going with us in the opinion that Mr. Buckingham was treated in a harsh and arbitrary manner, and whilst indulging their astonishment at the existence of such a state of things in any part of the British Empire so recently as five-and-thirty years ago, our readers must guard themselves against an idea that the regulations for

* Proceedings before His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, in relation to the appeal of James Buckingham, Esq. against certain Regulations of the Bengal Government on the subject of the Press. 1825.

the control of the press were a gratuitous piece of tyranny on the part of the Government. The respect of the vast native population for the acts, laws, or religion of their rulers would not be likely to be increased by seeing them daily called into question, doubted, disputed, or ridiculed with that freedom with which they are handled at home, by parties in the pay of, or in connexion with, those rulers—the authorities having, with what has since so fatally proved to have been mistaken forbearance, shown their respect for the quasi-religion of the natives by supporting it not only with their countenance but their cash, could scarcely allow the press to laugh at it or to demonstrate—at the risk of blowing into a conflagration the fanatical feelings of the Hindoos,—that the system they were supporting was a system of immorality, idolatry, blasphemy, and corruption. The matter was beset with difficulties. Sturdy Britons, who, true to their national instincts, are ever ready to resent an infringement of the liberty of the press, wheresoever it may occur, should remember that although the press is as a shining light in England, in India it may be, under certain circumstances, an open candle in a coal mine, and that, under such circumstances, the Government is perfectly justified, for the sake of public, and even of individual safety, in blowing it out—in fact, would be highly criminal if it did not do so.

Nor,—the question of expediency or of political right or wrong apart,—does it appear that Mr. Buckingham so conducted his journal as to deserve any exception to be made in his favour. We are not alone satisfied with Mr. Mill's testimony against it, but we have heard opinions of persons old enough to remember it, fully confirming his statements that the *Calcutta Journal* "lent itself to the utterance of morbid discontent and personal resentments—assailed the conduct of private individuals—impeached the acts of public functionaries—spread acrimonious dissen-

sions through society, and defied, whilst it affected to deprecate, the displeasure of the Government." *

With the highest veneration—almost idolatry of the great principles involved in the liberty of the press, we pause first to inquire what the press is in its relation to the public good of a community; and if it is prejudicial to the public good for a time, we say, unhesitatingly, extinguish it. It will burn the purer and the brighter for it afterwards. The situation can scarcely be conceived where the unrestrained freedom of the press can be antagonistic to the public safety or the public interest; but such conditions of society *may* exist—such a state of the body politic *may* occur. Times of great popular excitement or irritation, or of great national peril—a state of insurrection or rebellion may justify a check being put upon the free circulation of unduly weighed or insufficiently considered opinions, or of the sentiments of wicked or designing men; and we can fancy in a country placed in the circumstances of India, and in which no jury could be called together which did not consist either of natives or of the paid servants of the authorities, a written code, giving summary jurisdiction to the executive Government, might have been necessary. But the fifth clause, giving the power of instant expulsion from the territory was capable of being used for the purposes of tyranny, or annoyance, or intimidation to an extent that left the liberty of the press a mere sunbeam that might be extinguished by every passing cloud, or shut out from the homes of our fellow-subjects by the hand of a Governor-General or at the caprice of a Secretary to Government.†

In another part of our Eastern empire the Government were themselves the introducers of the newspaper press.

* Mill's "History of British India," vol. viii. p. 584.

† The history of Mr. Buckingham's case is contained at full length in the "Report of the Proceedings of Privy Council," which we have already quoted, and in a "Biographical Sketch of James Silk Buckingham," 1853, and the "Autobiography of James Silk Buckingham," 1855.

Seven years after Ceylon fell into our hands, and in the year 1802 the authorities started the *Government Gazette*. This is a solitary instance, we believe, throughout our colonial dominions, of the Government taking the initiative in establishing a newspaper.

East of the Ganges, in Pulo Penang, an almost unknown region, which extends from Hindostan to the Pacific Ocean, a paper called the *Prince of Wales' Island Gazette* was started in 1805, but suspended for some years, and not resumed until 1833.

At Singapore, at the extremity of the peninsula of Malacca, an English newspaper was set up in 1823, called the *Singapore Chronicle*. It was at first published at irregular intervals, then appeared every fortnight, and in 1833 became a weekly paper.

A native press had also sprung up in India. In 1822 a newspaper appeared at Calcutta in the Bengalee language, called the *Sambád Chandriká, or Moon of Intelligence*, and edited by a learned Hindoo.

A poor Creole had dibbed the seed of the newspaper into the new soil of Australia—it had germinated, and was now fructifying plentifully. The founder of the Australian press was a native of St. Kitts, where his father and brother were printers. George Howe (for that was his name) came to London and obtained employment as a printer on the *Times*, but in 1800 went to New South Wales, and, on the 5th of March, 1803, set up the *Sydney Gazette*, with the sanction of the liberal Governor King. Under a less enlightened ruler, a very rigorous censorship was set up, and entire columns cut out of the *Gazette* before publication, to the intense grief, it is said, of poor Howe, down whose black cheeks the large tears would fall, as he beheld the very labour which had pleased him most thrown away, and the articles of which he had been most proud, prohibited from meeting the public eye. Perhaps this censorship was the means of saving him from compe-

tition, for he had no rival while he lived, but it fretted and worried him, perhaps to the hastening of his death, which took place on May 11th, 1821. In the office of the *Sydney Gazette* may be seen this day, a tablet with the following inscription :—

IN MEMORY OF
GEORGE HOWE,
A CREOLE OF SAINT KITTS,
BORN 1769; DIED, MAY 11, 1821,
AGED 52.
HE INTRODUCED INTO AUSTRALIA
THE ART OF PRINTING,
INSTITUTED THE SYDNEY GAZETTE,
AND WAS THE
FIRST GOVERNMENT PRINTER;
BESIDES WHICH
HIS CHARITY KNEW NO BOUNDS.

In 1823, Sir Thomas Brisbane, on assuming the reins of government, at once proclaimed the liberty of the press, and the *Sydney Gazette*, then in the hands of Howe's son, was no longer in possession of the field. A second paper appeared in Sydney in 1824—the *Australian*, started by Ralph Wardell, LL.D. Young Howe, going with the times and outbidding competition, immediately enlarged his paper, and entrusted its management to the Rev. Hugh Mansfield. In 1825, E. S. Hall started the third paper, the *Sydney Monitor*, and young Howe, who had sold the *Gazette*, set up the *Tasmanian*.

Hobart Town was not far behind Sydney. In 1804, the *Colonial Times* was started by Alexander Bent, and, in 1816, there appeared the *Hobart Town Gazette*.

If a Creole planted the British press in Australia, it was indebted for its parentage in British Guiana to a couple of Dutchmen named Schultz and Volkutz, who established the *Berbice Royal Gazette*, in 1816, and brought it out twice a week, but it fell to the ground in 1840, leaving a survivor in the field.

The Cape of Good Hope had hailed its first paper, the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, which was set up by Mr. Greig on January 7th, 1824, suppressed by order of the Government in May, and resumed in August, 1825. We may anticipate a little for the sake of adding that it was again peremptorily suppressed in March, 1827, and not resumed until October, 1828.

Of our other colonies we only find two more adopting the press since we last surveyed them. In Newfoundland, the *Royal Gazette* was started in 1805, and the *Public Ledger* in 1822, and we can find no trace of an earlier press; and in Demerara, a paper—we believe the first—was started in 1805. Nova Scotia possessed three newspapers in 1810, all published at Halifax.

Such is the progress which our colonial press has made in the five-and-twenty years. We possess no statistics to show the increase of its circulation, or even the increase of its numbers, but have had to content ourselves with recording the date and some of the facts of its foundation in the various parts of that empire "on which the sun never sets."

But it was seen occasionally in other lands: and whilst the British flag waved over a foreign soil, the press raised its head in safety. The most remarkable instance of this occurred in 1807, when, the British fleet and army being in possession of Monte Video, a *Gazette* speedily appeared, edited by a young gentleman from Boston, named William Scotlay, who had received a liberal education at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and got a good salary in his temporary post. The first number appeared in May, 1807, and the commander-in-chief and admiral in command were in attendance when the first sheets were struck off, and were presented with copies according to their rank.

Nay, in the regions of snow even, the newspaper was flourishing—as early as the time of which we are speaking, the daring Arctic explorers had, as their successors have

done since, found a cardinal relief for the dulness of Polar winters in a record of the doings of that little world of theirs, set in a universe of ice. On board the *Hecla*, one of the ships of Captain Edward Parry's Expedition in search of the North-West Passage, ice-locked in Winter Harbour, off Melville Island; in the Polar Sea, and in latitude 74° north, and longitude 112° west, there appeared on the 1st of November, 1819, No. 1 of the *North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle*, which was carried on to its twenty-first number, and till the 20th of March, 1820, and afterwards reprinted in London. If this be a fact of no historical importance (for the paper was begot of no political principles), it seems to show what a place the newspaper holds, and even then held, in the minds of intelligent Englishmen. If it be a fact of little moment, we allude to it because it shows what hold the newspaper had taken, when these Englishmen could not be a few months in the ice without getting up and fondly cherishing an image of what they were so well used to at home.

The British press had now its advanced posts planted out in almost every place where the British flag waved or the British power ruled; so that, independently of the interest which attaches to these colonial papers for their own sake, as the pioneers of civilisation, the stimulants to exertion and enterprise, the protectors of order while law was forming, the assertors of British power and British freedom, and the champions of British rights and interests, they are tearing for themselves in deserts and rocky places, channels along which shall flow a sea of information to enrich and nourish the parent stem—the noble trunk of that proud old tree, stretching out its arms for a shelter to the weary, and a protection to the oppressed of every land and country; that tree of knowledge from which none are forbidden, but all are invited to pick the fruit; that oak of our social and political life, the free press of England.

CHAPTER X.

A RETURN TO THE LONDON PRESS—THE NEWSPAPERS TAKE THE PLACE OF PAMPHLETS—EXTRA ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FOR THE REPORTERS—TOLERATION IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS—A NEW DAILY PAPER—MURRAY'S "REPRESENTATIVE"—BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI—WILLIAM MAGINN—THE "REPRESENTATIVE" DROPS—RUINOUS LOSS—ROBERT BELL AND THE "WEEKLY DISPATCH"—HIS SUCCESSOR, WILLIAMS—ANOTHER NEW DAILY PAPER—THE "STANDARD"—DR. GIFFARD—ALARIC ATTILA WATTS—JOSEPH HUME ATTEMPTS TO BEFRIEND THE PRESS—BUT FAILS—A FEW LICENTIOUS PAPERS—THE "PALLADIUM," "AGE," AND "MORNING JOURNAL"—SLANDER ON THE PRESS—THE "JOHN BULL" AGAIN—LIBELS AND DAMAGES—THE LAST OF THE "STATESMAN"—W. M. WILLETT—ROBERT BELL, THE POET—FIRST APPEARANCE OF A DOUBLE "TIMES"—AMENDMENT OF THE LAW OF LIBEL—BANKRUPT LIBELLERS—O'CONNELL ATTACKS THE PRESS, AND SIBTHORP DEFENDS IT—STAMP DUTY AGITATION—TWOPENNY PAPERS—THE "INFAMOUS UNSTAMPED"—INFLUENCE OF THE PRESS—SIR ROBERT PEEL'S MISGIVINGS—JEREMY BENTHAM THINKS DIFFERENTLY—THE "HUE AND CRY"—PROFITS OF THE "LONDON GAZETTE."

RETURNING to the London press, we will see what was its standing at the commencement of the second quarter of the century, when a brighter future than it had yet known was beginning to dawn upon it. An intelligent writer of our own day has cast a retrospective glance over its state at the precise period of which we are speaking, and particularly observes how it was taking up the work formerly done by pamphlets which were gradually disappearing, whilst the political dissertations of the newspapers were increasing and taking in a wider area of discussion :—

"Newspapers had not only increased in number and circulation, but had enlarged in size, improved in literary management, and in the selection and variety of their contents. In lieu of mere chronicles of occurrences, they had become vast depositories of discussion and information on all questions of public interest and benefit. The

practice of pamphlet writing on ephemeral topics had been almost superseded by them, and by the disquisitions of the quarterly journals."*

The progress of the reporters, too, was steady; in the House of Commons they were not only tacitly allowed, but positively recognised by a provision for their accommodation, whilst in the House of Lords they were no longer treated as intruders.

Under Speaker Abbott, the upper bench of the strangers' gallery had been devoted to the reporters' exclusive use, with a door in the centre by which they alone were privileged to enter. This concession was the spoil of a sharp and short contest—the gain of a bold stand made by the reporters themselves. An important speech of Pitt had been left unnoticed by the papers—the morning journals came out without a word of the Minister's explanations, but only a notification that, in consequence of the crowded state and inconveniences of the gallery, the reporters had found it impossible to make their usual notes. They had, in fact, "struck," and the result was the appropriation, as we have said, of the upper bench of the gallery to their exclusive use. But, now, in 1826, they not only retained this bench, but had got a room allotted to them also, and at the end of the gallery passage might be seen a door with the words "Reporters' Room" inscribed upon it. This was for the use and accommodation of the "gentlemen of the press" previously to their taking their places in the gallery, whilst awaiting their turn to relieve those already working there, or during a division, when all strangers have to withdraw.

Things were progressing in the same direction in the House of Lords. Time had been, and that very recently too, when, if any person were seen with a note-book, taking down even the heads of the debates, a messenger would

* Wade's "British History," p. 760.

approach him and strike it solemnly from his hand; but this had ceased to be, and about 1826, Mr. Windyer, then a reporter for the public press, and afterwards a justice of the peace at Sydney, "was the first to rest his book on their Lordships' bar."*

Under these encouraging circumstances an attempt was made to establish a new morning paper; and a great publisher discovered to his very serious cost that the man who has been successful in bringing out books is not necessarily sure of achieving success with a newspaper. On the 25th of January, 1826, a party, of whom the late John Murray of Albemarle-street was the head, and Benjamin D'Israeli one of the members, set up the *Representative*, a Tory daily journal, in opposition to the *Times*. What precise position Mr. D'Israeli held in relation to this newspaper is not known; his chief biographer only says, "The chosen field for the exercise of his precocious talents is understood to have been a daily newspaper." . . . "What Mr. D'Israeli's connexion with the *Representative* was, it would, perhaps, be presumptuous to inquire farther."† Mr. Murray's army of clever writers was arrayed in the columns of the new paper, and his large capital devoted to it without stint. Dr. Maginn was sent to Paris as one of its foreign correspondents, and every department was filled by those men who had written the books which had made Murray's fortune. But the *Representative* never represented any one—from the first, it was clearly a failure, and its last number appeared on the 29th of July, in the year of its birth. There had previously been a Sunday paper of the same name brought out by Murdo Young, the late proprietor of the *Sun*, which sprung into existence on January 6th, 1822, and stopped, we believe, at its fifty-second number, on the 29th of December, and it was a

* Wade's "British History," p. 1048.

† Macknight's "Benjamin D'Israeli; a literary and political biography," pp. 27 and 30.

failure of Murray's usual sagacity to assume a name which had been so recently and so unsuccessfully held. He paid dearly for his mistake, for it was understood to have cost him twenty or thirty thousand pounds, and soon afterwards Moore puts down in his diary how Murray had removed from Albemarle-street into a smaller house.*

A more successful newspaper proprietor and founder than Murray was Robert Bell, who died at North Brixton four days before the *Representative*, on the 25th of July, at the age of sixty years. Mr. Bell had established the *Weekly Dispatch*,—already a very successful weekly paper of extreme political views—and had edited it from its commencement in 1818 till the time of his death, when Mr. Williams, an editor of Milton and Thomson, took his place. Mr. Bell was also the author of "A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Peasantry of Ireland."

Not long after the failure of the *Representative*, another experiment of a new daily paper was made, and proved successful; but this time it was to supply the wants of the evening readers. On the defection of the *Courier* from the Protestant section of the Tory party in 1827, a new evening paper was set up to advocate their views, and called the *Standard*. It was edited by Stanley Lees Giffard, LL.D., a native of Dublin, and son of an Irish Tory editor, by whom it was conducted for many years, and particularly distinguished by its very gentlemanly tone, which was maintained without any sacrifice of the force of argument or the vigour of style. Dr. Giffard was born in 1790, the son of Mr. John Giffard, a common councilman of Dublin, of some local note. Educated at Trinity College, young Giffard came to London with a view to studying for the bar; but, in 1819, he began editing the *St. James's Chronicle*, and was

* Lord John Russell's "Diary and Correspondence, &c. of Thomas Moore."

afterwards induced to undertake the *Standard*. His coadjutor in the task was Mr. Alaric Attila Watts, who was so wholesale a manufacturer of newspapers, that he calls for a notice in any work which gives their history. Mr. Watts was born in London on the 16th of March, 1799, and came from an ancient and distinguished family. He was educated at Wye College, Kent, and afterwards at Ashford, and began life as a tutor in a private family near Manchester, occasionally giving vent to the poetic fire that was in him, and drawing the eyes of men of taste to the germs of what promised to be high poetic talent. In the latter part of 1822, the booksellers who had purchased his first poem became the proprietors of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, of which they at once made Watts the editor, a post which he held for three years to the advantage of his employers and the improvement of the paper. But in 1824 he left them, and brought out the *Manchester Courier* on his own account on the 1st of January, 1825. He also at this time was one of the principal promoters of that new and showy class of fancy literature, the Annuals, the first of which, the "Literary Souvenir," he assisted in bringing out. In 1825 he sold his interest in the *Courier*, and came to London, and now his career of newspaper founder began in earnest. It is said that between 1827 and 1847, he had established, or assisted in establishing, upwards of twenty Conservative newspapers in town and country, among them the *Alfred* and *Old England*.* He remained on the *Standard* less than a year after its foundation, and was succeeded by Dr. Maginn: whilst he was off climbing the mountains and rugged rocks of newspaper enterprise in remote places, or fancying he discerned a prospect of newspaper success among the fogs and smoke of London. In 1833, he started, on February the 3d, the *United Service Gazette*, the first paper which had ever appeared of its kind in this country, in which he advocated army and navy

* Men of the Time (1856).

reform, and military and naval interests, for upwards of ten years. But, in 1849, a terrible dispute between himself and his partner, which had raged for years, and involved him in five suits in Chancery, ended in his having to sell his share of the paper, and his return to the *Standard*, occasionally (as did also his chief, Dr. Giffard) writing for the *Morning Herald*. The capital for starting the *Standard* is said by Mr. Knight Hunt to have been provided by Lord Lowther:* but this statement appears to be apocryphal, and the others which accompany it are full of error. About the same period as the *Standard*, two leading weekly papers were established—the *Atlas*, on the 21st May, 1826, and the *Spectator*, on July 5th, 1828, by Mr. Day of Holborn, and Mr. Robert Rintoul, under whose long and skilful editorship it attained to its present high character.

The late Joseph Hume now appeared as a friend of the press in an abortive attempt to procure the repeal of one of those "Six Acts" of Lord Castlereagh's, which were passed in 1819—the one which defined what were newspapers in the Stamp Office sense of the word. He had previously exhibited a friendly feeling towards the press, by proposing, in 1825, the reduction of the stamp duty to twopence and the advertisement duty to one shilling: but his motion was lost—not a little, perhaps, in consequence of his foolish and, to the House of Commons, laughable pledge that the revenue would not suffer. "He would guarantee the Chancellor of the Exchequer against loss," he declared; "so anxious was he, that he would *almost* become *personally* responsible if, at the end of a year, any loss should accrue." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who knew the value of the word "almost" to a man like Joseph Hume, smilingly replied, that although he would willingly take the honourable gentleman's guarantee in any private transaction, he could not feel justified in doing

* Fourth Estate, vol. ii. p. 240.

so when a large amount of public revenue was concerned—and so the validity of Mr. Hume's guarantee was never tried. But, when he brought forward his motion for relieving pamphlets or periodicals treating of public matters, which no one but the Act of Parliament called newspapers, from the operation of the Stamp Act, the press looked to him with hope—but it was disappointed, and on the 31st of May, 1827, Mr. Hume's second good-natured, but not very well executed effort, shared the fate of the first, and broke down.

The London press was purged of much of the ribaldry, sedition, and slander which had undeniably defiled it a few years before. One of the few papers which still traded in private scandal was the *Palladium*, and the latitude in which it indulged brought undeserved discredit upon its more discreet contemporaries, from those who could not or would not take a close view of the subject; and gave an excuse, on one occasion, for a remark from the judicial bench as foully false as any that had in the worst times of the worst judges disgraced it. On the 2d of April, 1827, an action was tried in the Court of King's Bench, in which Colonel Fitzhardinge Berkeley (afterwards Lord Seagrave, and the same Berkeley who had once taken the law in his own hands against a newspaper editor, and burnt his fingers by it) obtained fifty pounds damages from Colonel W. Blennerhasset Fairnam, proprietor of the *Palladium*, for a libel published in July of the preceding year, and the Lord Chief Justice thought it a good opportunity for asserting that "in the present state of the press we were living in the greatest state of tyranny under the sun."

This unseemly, because notoriously untrue, assertion is, we believe, the last illiberal word that has fallen from the lips of a judge upon the character of the press, and we set it down here in order that it may not go unrecorded when prejudice and bigotry played their last freak under the horsehair of the judicial wig.

In addition to the *Palladium*, we believe there were two exceptionable journals published about the same time—the *Age* and the *Morning Journal;* but the latter soon fell to pieces for want of support, and the *Age* was so short of funds that its conductors were obliged to go to gaol for the damages in an action for libel; and for these trumpery and unworthy members the whole body of journals and journalists are condemned in one sweeping censure! But, as it has been, so it will ever be: the people who advocate the most unlimited freedom for the press—who, pretending to be its friends, claim for it immunities inconsistent with what is allowed to the other estates and institutions of the realm, and incompatible with the public safety or the national honour, are those ignorant or designing enemies of the true liberty of the press, who give pretexts for its curtailment which true and honest men can only grieve for and regret.

Conspicuous among the organs of violent and reckless slander, was the *John Bull*, still. In 1827, it brought a charge of a foul crime against a Mr. Hartshorn, a Cambridge undergraduate, who was compelled to clear his character by indicting Shackell, the proprietor of the paper, and putting himself in the way of cross-examination. But the defendant, after entering, did not support his plea; and Mr. Hartshorn being examined, so straightforwardly vindicated himself that Sir James Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, shook hands with him in open court.* After this the *John Bull* gradually, but steadily, assumed a better tone, and became the organ of a large, powerful, and respectable, if not popular, party.

It is true that actions for libel were very frequent again just about this time, but they were often brought upon very little provocation, such as the case of Yrisarri *v.* Clement† (on the 13th of February, 1826); or, still

* Speeches of Lord Campbell, p. 413.

† Bingham's "Reports," vol. iii. pp. 432-42.

worse, Stockley *v.* Clement. In this case the action was brought against the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and tried on the 16th of May, 1827, in the Court of King's Bench. The libel consisted of an advertisement which had appeared in the paper, cautioning bill-discounters and others against negotiating a bill of exchange alleged to have been forged. The defendant pleaded that the advertisement was *bonâ fide*, and that there was no malice, but it was held to be a libel nevertheless.* On the 10th of June, 1828, the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam brought an action and got £50 damages against Robeson and another, as proprietors of the *Morning Herald*, for asserting that he was in the habit of obtaining converts to his church by bribery and offers of money.† In 1829, one Thomas Chivis, a Greenwich coachman, brought *his* action against Clement, the proprietor of *Bell's Life in London*, for some disparaging remarks against the Greenwich coachmen in general, and against himself in particular, and accusing him of insulting conduct to his passengers; and the jury gave the Jarvey five pounds damages.‡

In a case against the same paper, argued in 1828, Fisher *v.* Clement, the judge held that, in considering the question of libel, it was not necessary for the jury to believe that the defendant intended by his remarks to injure the plaintiff, but whether the tendency of the remarks themselves was to do so. The absence of malice could only be considered as a plea for mitigation.§

Allusion to the *Age* and its discreditable companions reminds us of a somewhat similar paper of a former period, the *Statesman*, and that we have to record, in 1829, the death of one of its former editors. W. M. Willett had guided the *Statesman* through the stormy times of the

* Bingham's "Reports," vol. iv. pp. 162-8.
† Ibid. vol. v. pp. 17-24.
‡ Barnewall and Cresswell's "Cases," vol. ix. pp. 172-6.
§ Ibid. vol. x. pp. 472-6.

"O. P. rows" in 1809, which brought him prominently before the public. He afterwards edited the *British Traveller*, and died at Finsbury in December, 1829, aged sixty-three. The same year, we believe, introduced Mr. Robert Bell, the veteran journalist, poet, and editor of poems, to the editorship of the *Atlas*, then a rising weekly paper.

A phenomenon appeared in the newspaper firmament, which we are now accustomed to look upon with the naked eye every morning without being blinded by it—a "monster paper," which we now reckon only of the ordinary size—a miracle, for anything smaller than which we would now refuse to pay our fourpence—a broadsheet which we can buy at the present time, equal in point of size, and of greater merit in point of contents, for a penny. On the 29th of January, 1829, the *Times* came out on a double sheet, composed of eight pages or forty-eight columns—the size of the ordinary morning papers of our own day, and two-thirds of the size of the present ordinary *Times*. This was another landmark of the enterprising march of John Walter—another stage pushed on in advance of his contemporaries, and to keep up with the spirit of the age. In the next year, 1830, the amount of duty paid by the *Times* was the then unprecedented sum of seventy thousand pounds. His diligence did not go unrewarded: he had strode forward and clasped the golden spoil!

The Government now voluntarily proposed to do that which they had objected to Mr. Hume doing for the press—namely, to abolish, or rather to amend the Libel Act passed by Lord Castlereagh in 1819, among his famous Six Acts. But, whilst repealing the penal portion of the Act, they were still desirous of retaining the preventive and restrictive clauses, and proposed that the security required from proprietors and printers of newspapers under the old Act should be raised from three hundred to four hundred pounds.

The *Age*, *Morning Journal*, and *Palladium* are again the cancers in the heart of the London press, which afford the Government a plausible excuse for the free use of the knife. It is mentioned that a practice existed among this class of papers of having them registered at the Stamp office in the names of men of straw, from whom nothing could be recovered even after a jury had awarded damages for libel. Our readers will remember the history of Arrowsmith, Weaver, and Shackell of the *John Bull*—the *Age* was conducted on the same system. Its policy was, as its editor, Richards, admitted, to raise it into notoriety by the publication of libels, and then to use it as a political engine. We grieve to find among its staff the name of William Maginn. Against this paper sixteen actions had been brought for libel—sixteen judgments obtained; but not a farthing of damages could be recovered—at one time, a poor old woman was registered as its proprietor! The *Morning Journal* had just succumbed to the libel actions it had had to answer, the proprietor having not another farthing left to pay damages with—the *Palladium* replied to the draughts upon it on the same account, "No effects." Now all this seemed to justify the adoption of more stringent measures for the protection of private character —at all events it was a strong case for Government to come before the House of Commons withal, and ask for more restrictive powers. Lord Morpeth, however, expressing a proper abhorrence of the vile prints that lived by slander and died of damages, urged the simple repeal of the old Act, without any alteration of the security, and, on the consideration of the "Libel Law Amendment Bill" in committee on the 6th of July, 1830, his motion was carried by a majority of twenty-seven votes over twenty-one.

We are again afforded an opportunity of admiring how skin deep are the professions of politicians. We have

already seen the friends of liberty forsaking or arrayed against the press, and the traditionary enemies to its emancipation protecting it. "It is lawful to attack or slander our opponents," writes each class of politicians in turn, "but it is illegal to malign US or our measures."

The efforts for the further relief of the newspaper press which followed the Amendment of the Libel Act present us with some startling pictures. Thus, on a petition being presented to the House of Commons for a repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Duty, signed by eleven hundred compositors, Daniel O'Connell, and E. Davenport, a radical star of lesser magnitude, took occasion to object to the admission of newspaper reporters, and to suggest the appointment of regular reporters by the House, to be sworn, and entirely in its pay and employment, and under its control. This summoned to the defence of the press, Sir Robert Peel and Colonel Sibthorp. The former bears testimony to the accurate and impartial performance of their duties by the newspaper reporters, and administers a dignified rebuke to the House:—"He must say that the reports of the proceedings of that House were given with singular correctness, and, what was still higher praise, with great impartiality. He very much doubted the policy of that arrangement which had been suggested, that every word uttered in the House, and the exact terms of every sentence should be faithfully and accurately reported. On the whole, he did not think there was any reason to complain of the manner in which the speeches in that House were reported. Indeed, he considered that a very wise and useful discretion was employed in lopping off some of the superfluities which were uttered. . . . . He was of opinion that honourable members—and he included himself in the remark—would gain nothing by having every word spoken in the House reported. That would neither be advantageous to the public, nor very creditable to themselves." * On the

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xxv. (1830), p. 892.

same occasion Colonel Sibthorp declares:—"The more the press was encouraged, the greater, he was convinced, would be the benefit to the public;" and was himself the proposer of increased accommodation for the reporters, which, however, the House was not in the mood to grant.

The abolition, or at all events the reduction, of the Newspaper Stamp Duty now came to be a question heard even above the shouts and exclamations of the multitude clamouring for Parliamentary Reform. It was perhaps the agitation and discussion of that great measure that suggested the other. The imposition of the newspaper stamp was felt to be a disadvantage to the popular side, for it stood in the way of the free ventilation of the subject among those orders whom it was desired to form and mould into that "pressure from without," which was to force open the sluice-gates of Parliament, and let the corruption of centuries run out. There were legal difficulties in the way of addressing the multitude in public meetings—men had already been prosecuted for it—and there was also considerable risk of tumult and commotion; and the popular leaders turned to the press as a medium of communication with those whom they wished to stir up to demand Parliamentary Representation for themselves. But they found a price put upon the press which shut it up against the eyes of the class they sought to address, and with undismayed energy they set to work to remove this obstacle to their progress. The voice of Manchester was the first to make itself heard, and, in 1830, that town presented petitions to the House of Commons, through Lord Morpeth, Mr. Strutt, and others, for the abolition or reduction of the Newspaper Stamp Duty. On the 12th of November we find Mr. Poulett Thompson making a promise to the House that he would bring forward a motion on the subject of the Stamp before Christmas; but the Ministry of Peel went out soon afterwards, and so much business fell upon the shoulders of the House that

it forgot Mr. Thompson's promise, and seems, indeed, for a time to have lost sight of the subject altogether. But the public out of doors had not. The subject had been suggested to them: they had been promised a cheap press of their own, and they would have it. The Stamp Act remained unrepealed, but twopenny newspapers flew abroad. The fourpenny stamp kept up the price of the regular press at sevenpence, so an irregular press started up, without a stamp, at twopence. Of course the tone of these papers (as the tone of the proscribed will always be) was exaggerated. At enmity with the law, they would have it destroyed: fined and imprisoned by magistrates, they would do away with magistrates and governors altogether: wincing under one species of restraint, they would have emancipated men from all obligations legal or moral. Many high-sounding truths may be enunciated on such subjects, and, unleavened by reason, may go for serious and solid arguments: and this dangerous philosophy is always palatable to those whose appetites, whether for knowledge or excitement, are strong, and have been left unattended to, unfed, and unrefined. The "infamous unstamped," as they were called by their higher priced and lawful contemporaries, soon attained to a wide circulation for those days, when a taste for political knowledge was only of recent birth. *Carpenter's Political Letter*, and Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* and *London Dispatch* were the principal of these unstamped papers, and the last named is reported to have had a circulation of twenty-five thousand copies weekly. But at present the Government paid little heed to them, and they circulated, at first, far and wide without interruption from the laws.

The regular papers, meanwhile, were deriving a largely increased sale from the reform excitement, and during the year 1830, 12,962,000 had passed through the post.

A thoughtful and unassuming writer has recorded his impression of the progress made up till this time by the

newspaper press. "The remarkable advancement which newspapers have made," he says, speaking of the period of 1830, "alike in ability of thought and writing, and in the extent of their influence on the minds of the public—the extraordinary amount of active speculation and spirited composition which their anonymous authors have lavished on them during the last thirty years, would fully justify expressions of surprise like those which escaped from us, when we observed, in the early part of the century, similar phenomena in the larger periodicals."*

Sir Robert Peel, however, viewed the influence they were gaining with the jealousy of a cautious politician, and saw in the Reform Bill only another means of raising them into a power of greater evil. He was convinced that it would introduce "the very worst and vilest species of despotism—the despotism of demagogues; the despotism of journalism—that despotism which had brought neighbouring countries, once happy and flourishing, to the very brink of ruin and despair."†

But Jeremy Bentham had proclaimed a very different dogma, and had laid down the principle, now so generally recognised, that newspapers are a safety-valve as well as a controlling power—as Bulwer Lytton has so gracefully said, preventing the stern necessity for revolution. Peel's apprehensions should have been calmed by those words of Bentham: "Experience has shown that newspapers are one of the best means of directing opinion—of quieting feverish movements—of causing the lies and artificial rumours by which the enemies of the State may attempt to carry on their evil designs to vanish. In these public papers, instruction may descend from the Government to the people, or ascend from the people to the Government; the greater the freedom allowed, the more correctly may a

* Rev. William Spalding's "History of English Literature," p. 404.
† Guizot's "Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel," p. 54.

judgment be formed upon the course of opinion—with so much the greater certainty will it act."*

The last event which we have to record before we close the page of 1830 is the death, on July the 15th, of Joseph Downes, of Temple Bar, aged seventy-seven. It is only necessary to do so, because he was editor and printer of the official *Hue and Cry*, or Government Police Gazette, and his accounts disclosed some curious particulars of the management of a Government paper. Among the rest, it appears that his salary as editor—(and little enough there is to edit, in the strict meaning of the word, which a working printer could not do)—was one hundred pounds per annum, but the cost of printing 111,200 copies was £1,712. The *Hue and Cry* was entering upon a more extended sphere than it had yet known; the new police force had been formed, and its readers were increased a hundred-fold, inasmuch as it was now delivered every morning at each of the new district station-houses. Each policeman also was expected to purchase a copy, but he got it for a penny less than the general public. The *Hue and Cry* did not, however, at all times confine itself to descriptions of rogues and rewards for vagabonds, for, on the 15th of July, 1833, Cobbett called the attention of the House of Commons to some remarks which appeared in it justifying the police and impugning the evidence of some witnesses against them before a Parliamentary Committee.

Whilst on the subject of official papers, we may here also mention that, according to a return made in the year 1831, the receipts of the *London Gazette* for advertisements, &c. were £15,083 17*s.* 8*d.*; whilst the cost of printing, expenses and other outgoings, amounted to £7,807 12*s.* 1*d.*, thus leaving a profit of £7,276 7*s.* 7*d.* for the year.

* Works of Jeremy Bentham, by Bowring, vol. i. p. 568.

CHAPTER XI.

MACAULAY AND THE PRESS—RECOMMENDED TO THE "TIMES" BY MOORE—ALARMING STATE OF THE UNSTAMPED—PRIVILEGE!—LORD LYNDHURST QUESTIONS THE POWER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—EARL GREY AND LORD BROUGHAM TESTIFY FOR THE NEWSPAPERS—JOHN MITFORD—DEATH OF JOHN BELL—DR. BIRKBECK ADVOCATES A CHEAP PRESS—"SWING" THE OFFSPRING OF THE STAMP DUTY—SPECIMENS OF THE UNSTAMPED—ATTACKED BY THE LAW—NUMEROUS PROSECUTIONS—ARRESTS AND SEIZURES—COMMON INFORMERS—EDWARD LYTTON BULWER'S BRILLIANT APPEAL ON BEHALF OF THE PRESS—PROPOSES THE TOTAL ABOLITION OF ADVERTISEMENT AND STAMP DUTIES—THE CLERKS OF THE ROADS AND THEIR PRIVILEGES—PROPORTION OF NEWSPAPERS TO THE POPULATION.

MACAULAY chose the *Times* as a channel through which some of his most sparkling streams of wit and humour and poetry should leap and fall and flow to the startled and listening ear of the town. We know little of his having written political articles for the newspaper press—his powers of argument, of analysis, of comparison he reserved in the greatest measure for the Senate and the Reviews: a few letters are all that we readily remember to have seen of his, relating in any way to politics in the public papers. But he let off some brilliant squibs, and lit up the dull columns of the *Times* with some sparks from the anvil on which the "Lays of Ancient Rome" were forged. Of these Moore mentions two or three, and relates how the authorship of them was divulged. It occurred at a breakfast given by Rogers:—"In the course of conversation, Campbell quoted a line,—

'Ye diners out, from whom we guard our spoons,'

and, looking over at me, said, significantly, 'You ought to know that line.' I pleaded not guilty; upon which he

said, 'It is a poem that appears in the *Times*, that everyone attributes to *you*;' but I again declared that I did not even remember it. Macaulay then broke silence, and said, to our general surprise, 'That is *mine*,' on which we all expressed a wish to have it recalled to our memories, and he repeated the whole of it. I then remembered having been much struck with it at the time, and said that there was another squib better, on the subject of W. C. Banks' Candidateship for Cambridge, which so amused me when it appeared, and showed such power in that style of composition, that I wrote up to Barnes about it, and advised him, by all means, to secure that hand as an ally. 'That was mine also,' said Macaulay; thus discovering to us a new power, in addition to that varied store of talent, which we had already known him to possess."* This is recorded by Moore, in his Diary, under date of the year 1831.

It may well be imagined that at this period of intense political excitement, when every pulse of public feeling was beating at fever rate—every artery of public sentiment throbbing till it threatened to burst, the press was the engine that regulated public opinion—fanning it into flame when it was seen languishing, or pouring upon it a flood of reason and remonstrance when it was threatening every institution of the land with destruction. The penny and twopenny unstamped and illegal papers were increasing in number and maniacal violence, as we shall shortly have occasion more particularly to notice—they had outgrown the intentions of those who had at first favoured them, and, Frankenstein-like, were become objects of horror to those who had at first played with them—they had slipped the bridle and were performing the maddest gallops, rampant with republicanism and infidelity, trampling under foot every consideration of decency or morality,

* Lord John Russell's "Memoirs, &c., of Thomas Moore," vol. vi. p. 213.

and threatening annihilation to every principle of sound politics and true religion: the men who had set this machine in motion, thinking to control it within the necessities of their own schemes, and to work it for the purpose of producing their own ends, sprang back as the fly-wheel whirred from their hands, and, with dismay and terror, looked on as it rushed round with a fury that would dash everything to pieces that might come in its way.

But the nobler combatants on each side in that great battle of Reform—the *Times*, the *Chronicle*, the *Herald*, and the *Post*—although fighting with hearty energy and vigour, seldom lost sight of the chivalry of their order in their Herculean conflict—for it might be truly called a Herculean task to clear out that Augean stable of Parliamentary corruption. The *Times* received the most frequent wounds, and for two or three years the Parliament, reformed as well as unreformed, resented the part it had taken in the fray. The temper of the legislators who objected to the process of purification may be estimated by a few specimens of the tone in which they spoke of the press.

On the 31st of March, 1831, Sir Robert Harry Inglis complained that the *Times* of the 14th had been guilty of a breach of the privilege of the House of Commons in an article on Parliamentary Reform, in which it had asserted that there were borough nominees and lacqueys in the House; and the second reading of the Reform Bill was suspended whilst a proposition was being considered that the Attorney-General should be instructed to prosecute the writer of these "base and scandalous libels." Sir Francis Burdett, in a warm speech, defended the *Times*. Sir Charles Wetherall, with equal warmth, replied to him. Sir Charles Forbes, with greater heat, exclaimed that "those infamous paragraphs were the attacks of cowardly assassins, who dared not to put their names to their sentiments—cowardly, licentious libellers, who, if they had the spirit, would be assassins." Mr. C. W. Wynn and Sir

Henry Hardinge would have the paper prosecuted. Lord Althorp, Sir James Graham, Lord John Russell, "plain John Campbell," and Henry Hunt, commonly known as "the blacking-maker," Daniel O'Connell, and the Attorney-General spoke and voted in favour of a return to the previous question—the Reform Bill, which was standing still—and "the previous question" was carried.

On the 12th of September, in the same year, Colonel Sibthorp complained of misrepresentations in the *Times* in a report of his speech on one of the clauses of the Reform Bill. The report was one of those *ruses* which the *Times* knew so well how to play off—attempts at "writing down," which would have been considered more clever than fair were not everything thought fair in such a war. On this occasion, the gallant Colonel's speech was reported to have been received and interrupted at almost every word with ridicule—"a laugh," "continued laughter," "laughter," "bursts of laughter," "cries of Oh, oh!" "cries of Question, Question," &c. &c., expressions of derision which, it was alleged, the House had never used. Pressing his motion for the appearance of the printer to a division, he lost it by 73 votes to 7.

In the House of Lords, the *Times* was less fortunate. That august assembly—never so querulous with the press as the Lower House—was moved by the Earl of Limerick, on the 18th of April, 1831, to notice a breach of privilege committed by the editor of the *Times* in calling him "a thing with human pretensions," and an absentee. The speech of the Marquis of Londonderry on this occasion provokes a smile at this distance of time—it sounds like the flouting of a pettish, pouting girl:—"Noble Lords in the libel before them had been called 'things,' and he would put it to their Lordships to say whether it was pleasant for any Lord to be called a 'thing' in a public newspaper. This was not all; for not only had their Lordships been called 'things,' but they were designated

as 'things with human pretensions.' No person could hesitate to say that the calling a peer of that House a 'thing,' and a 'thing with human pretensions,' was a libel, and a breach of privilege. He therefore hoped that such an example would be made of the printer as would teach the press that the Parliament of England was not to be brought forward in such an indecent and abominable manner, as to call a peer a 'thing with human pretensions.'"

On the next day, John Joseph Lawson, the printer of the *Times*, attended according to order, and was examined by the House, who tried by every turn and variety of questioning to get out of him who were the proprietors and editors of the paper. This secret he honourably refuses to betray, but takes upon himself the entire responsibility. In extenuation he sets up two pleas, which appear idle to any one who knows the relation of the printer to the paper—especially such a paper as the *Times*:—"It was almost impossible for him, using every diligence in his power, to peruse every separate paragraph which appeared in the paper. The paragraph of which their Lordships complained, had found its way inadvertently into the paper." It were as idle to suppose that, if he had seen the paragraph, he would or could have ordered its omission, as it is hard to believe that an article, evidently editorial, had crept into the paper by accident. Lord Wynford moves, "That John Joseph Lawson, having admitted himself to be the printer of a false and scandalous libel, which had appeared in the *Times* newspaper of the 16th instant, be fined £100, and committed to Newgate till the fine be paid." Here the interest and importance of the debate commence, for it is of interest and importance as involving the question whether the House had the power to inflict a fine and term of imprisonment as well. The Lord Chancellor (Brougham), the Duke of Wellington, Earl Grey, and the Marquis of Lansdowne are in favour of

a committal to the custody of the Usher of the Black Rod instead of Newgate, and the suggestion is adopted. On the 19th Mr. Lawson is again brought to the bar, and hands in a petition and an apology; and Lord Brougham gets up and questions the power of the House to imprison for six months, and inflict a fine of, it might be, ten thousand pounds, on a prisoner tried by no jury and defended by no counsel, because a noble lord may complain of his feelings being hurt by a newspaper report—that decision being come to, and that sentence pronounced, moreover, by a court at once prosecutor, judge, and jury, "without deliberation, and under a sense of wounded dignity." Lord Tenterden contends that the House has the power, and the debate is adjourned till the next day. On the 20th, Lord Mansfield opens the proceedings by ordering the gallery to be cleared of strangers, so that the debate is virtually not reported farther—we only know that Lord Mansfield, the Earl of Eldon, and Lord Wynford take the same view of the power of the House as Lord Tenterden, but that Mr. Lawson is eventually called in, reprimanded, and discharged on payment of the fees. In the course of this debate the press was alternately described as base and great—a public good, and a national curse. The Earl of Limerick describes it as "a tyrant that ruled all things—that pressed everything under its feet." The Earl of Haddington, the Earl of Harewood, the Marquis of Londonderry, and Lord Teynham concur, and complain of the coarse and virulent libels on the Queen (Adelaide), for her supposed opposition to Reform. The Earl of Fife says, "Some of their Lordships pretended to undervalue the press, but if he were not misinformed, there were some lords who had shares in newspapers." We miss the allusion, and cannot now fill up the blank which the Earl has here left. But, ringing above all, come down to us the testimony of Earl Grey, and of my Lord Chancellor Brougham. "At the present moment," says the former,

"the daily press of the country displays more ability than it has ever done at any former period;" and, "There never was a time," says the latter, "when, in a period of political heat—at a period of great conflict and of much animosity (he spoke of the daily press, for he saw little more, and not much of that), but there never was a time when, under such circumstances of excitement, the daily press was conducted with more ability and with greater purity." It will be observed that the Reform Minister and the Reform Chancellor make no exceptions in speaking of the daily press; but Lord Brougham subsequently speaks of the weekly press with a qualification which might suggest to us the faintest suspicion of a touch of partisanship upon his Lordship's mind:—"He certainly thought the press purer and better conducted than it was twenty-five years ago, with the exception, indeed, of some Sunday papers, which, while they profaned the Sabbath by the grossest libels, indecent and blasphemous, yet professed the warmest attachment to the Church Establishment, and were, no doubt, on account of that attachment only, so warmly patronised by the Clergy and their friends." *

A waif and stray of the press comes staggering in our way at this stage, and calls upon us, with drunken importunity, to record, before we go on, how a poor misguided journalist lived and died. The death of John Mitford left not even a shadow upon the Christmas hearth of a friend—the poor fellow fell over into his grave on the 25th of December, 1831, but tumbled none of the Christmas embers of his family to pieces. He was a cousin of Miss Mitford, the pourtrayer of country life, and of Dr. Mitford, the historian of Greece, and possessed talent which might have added increased lustre to the name he bore. Born at Mitford Castle, in Northumberland, his

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. iii. (3d series), pp. 1482-6, *et, alia.*

spirit turned, as so many untamed spirits do, to the sea, and he fought under Hood and Nelson. But quitting the navy, he attached himself to the newspaper press in various capacities, and afterwards edited the *Scourge*, the *Bon Ton Gazette*, the *Quizzical Gazette* (a penny publication), &c. But his habits plunged him to the neck in poverty. Whilst editing the *Bon Ton Gazette*, Elliot, the proprietor, had to keep him in a sort of cellar, with a candle and a bottle of gin (which was constantly being replenished), and a piece of old carpeting for his coverlid at night—yet he would stealthily creep out in search of gin unless his shoes were taken away from him. He wrote the songs, "The King is a true British Sailor," and "Johnny Newcome in the Navy." The publisher of the latter allowed him a shilling a day while he was writing it. The money was expended after his own manner—twopence in bread and cheese and an onion, and the rest in gin, and he had nothing to pay for the grass and nettles in Bayswater fields that formed his bed at night. A compassionate Samaritan on one occasion gave him a pair of Wellington boots; but they were speedily sold for a shilling and converted into gin, which he at once sat down to drink out. The man who had bought them soon afterwards returned, and jeeringly told him that he had just pawned them for fifteen shillings. "Ah!" said Mitford, with a self-gratulatory shrug, "but you went out in the cold to do it." For several years this poor, idle, straying, wilful, clever sot lived by his wits, and slept three nights in the week in the open air, when he could not muster threepence for a filthy bed in St. Giles's. He died of course perfectly destitute, leaving a wife and family, who had been taken care of by his near relative, Lord Redesdale, and his poor emaciated body was buried by Mr. Green, of Will's Coffee House, Lincoln's Inn Fields, who had, in early days, been a shipmate of the unfortunate fellow.

John Bell, the employer and patron of that other

wretched sot, whom we have described already as the first editor of the *Weekly Messenger*, also died on February 26th of this year, at Fulham, in his eighty-sixth year.

Vigorous efforts were now being made to procure the abolition of the newspaper stamp. On the 31st of January, 1831, a great meeting had been held at the City of London Institution in Aldersgate-street, at which Dr. Birkbeck had presided, and Mr. Hume had quoted a return showing that the newspaper stamp duty then produced £800,000 to the revenue, and the advertisement duty £153,000. To show the prohibitory effects of the latter tax, it was stated that in New York, eight newspapers contained 1,456,416 advertisements, whilst four hundred newspapers in England and Ireland only contained 100,000. And, further, that, in the twelve daily papers of New York, there were more advertisements than appeared in all the daily papers published in England and Ireland.

Petitions were also presented to Parliament by Lord Morpeth, Mr. Hume, Mr. Charles Buller, and Mr. Hunt, all or most of which relied for their principal argument upon the incendiarism then so common throughout the country, and which they contended a spread of knowledge among the lower orders would be sure to diminish—in fact, "Swing" was to be put out by a cheap press.

On the presentation of these petitions, several conversations occurred which indicated that the House of Commons was gradually becoming less hard of hearing upon the subject, and that the time for a modification of the duties was approaching. On one of these occasions, Mr. Hunt rested his objections to the duties upon their illegality—the bright notion had struck him that, having been passed by an unreformed House of Commons, they were invalid, and he forgot that the same argument would abrogate all our modern laws.

But there were strong and reasonable arguments brought

forward, and perhaps none stronger than the existence of the unstamped penny and twopenny papers. Prosecution, fine, and imprisonment had failed to suppress these dangerous hornets. Mr. Knight Hunt appears to have thought they were hardly treated, and even attempts something like a vindication of them, but his generous sympathy is undeserved, and his admiration of the freedom of the press is so large and wide that his sight fails to see what dangerous impostors have crept into it for shelter. To show how utterly undeserving they were of claiming the immunities of the press, we shall quote a few articles from their columns, which will give an idea of their style and tendencies.

Attempting a parallel between the state of things in France, which had just exploded and shivered the throne of Charles the Tenth to atoms, and the condition of English politics, the *Poor Man's Guardian*, a paper published by one Hetherington, indulged in the following language :—

"We maintain that the act of Messrs. Capet,* Polignac, &c., which so deservedly lost Charles X. of France his throne, and consigned Polignac, &c. to imprisonment, was not more arbitrary nor atrocious than the present proceedings of Messrs. Guelph,† Grey, Brougham, Denman, &c. The French tyrants intended to destroy the liberty of the press (which is the very key and safeguard of every other liberty)—the English tyrants intend the same. What difference is there, then, between the act of Capet, &c. and the act of Guelph, &c. ? Why, there is this, and this only difference—the act of Capet, &c. was the act of a hero, and the act of Guelph, &c. is the act of a dastardly assassin!" . . . . "But William Guelph and his minions, although they think they have the right and also the power to do as they please with their own people, yet have not courage

* Meaning Charles X. † William IV.

enough to bite with their own teeth. They have not courage to fight with their own weapons. They will not sully their own bright sword, but they will mangle us with the teeth of a deceased bloodhound.* They will stab us with the dagger of a dead assassin! Cowardly tyrants!" . . "Charles Capet and his minions deliberated, and ordered or caused their armed slaves to violate, in endeavouring to suppress their popular papers, not the laws but the rights and liberties of the whole people of France; and William Guelph and his minions have doubtless deliberated, and ordered or caused the violation, not of the laws, but the rights and liberties of the whole people of England, by their present endeavours to destroy these penny papers. The people of France resisted the tyrannical attempt, hurled the tyrant from his throne, and caged, as they would tigers, his minions. And are the people of England such sorry slaves that they can only talk and sing of freedom? Will not they, too, resist the law of these tyrants? Will not they, too, have a glorious revolution? We must resist it, for, be the laws binding on you, they are not on us. We have not consented to them—we have always condemned them. We have never authorised, but have always denied the right of any William Guelph, or any other Guelph, to control our actions, and make laws for us. We deny such power now, and we will not be bound by their laws!"

Hetherington, the vendor and publisher of this ribald trash, was prosecuted, and committed in default of paying the penalty, not of writing or publishing it, under Lord Castlereagh's Act, as pretended, but under the simple Stamp Act, for selling it without the required stamp. With this committal for its text, another of the unstamped, *The Republican, or the Sovereignty of the People,* utters the following inflammatory article:—"An honest British citizen, for having published untaxed useful knowledge, tending to

* Lord Castlereagh.

open the eyes of the bamboozled multitude, has been summoned to Bow-street office." . . . . "But Citizen Hetherington will not acknowledge the validity of the Act of Parliament under which he has been convicted. It is not binding on him—he has nothing to do with it, except to defy it. And why does he defy it? Because he had no representative in the Parliament in which this villanous ordinance was passed. He considers the damnable knowledge-taxing mandate of the borough-mongering parliamentarians as much binding on the unrepresented people of England as the contemptible impotent ordinances of Charles Capet were binding on the people of France. He who approves or enforces them must be a devilish malignant fiend, and ought to be hunted out of society! He who submits to them is a contemptible, abject, and cowardly slave, a disgrace to his country, and an enemy to his fellow-citizens. Acting on this incontrovertible principle, he defies the ordinances of self-elected tyrants." . . . . "His publications were instituted for the sole benefit of the cheated, plundered, and insulted multitude—to them he appeals for protection against the diabolical machinations of the villains in power."

A third unstamped journal, the *Prompter*, of June 18th, 1831, thus declares its destructive principles, and teaches the lower and uneducated and impressible classes the following philosophy:—

"With the voice of a man, with the spirit of a good man and a citizen struggling to be free, I cry out to all Europe, and more particularly to my own countrymen, 'Down with King, Priests, and Lords!'" . . . . "Either in war or in peace, kingcraft, priestcraft, or lordcraft is a system of murder, plunder, and spoliation—then down with King, Priests, and Lords!"

Such were the writers and such the papers which Mr. Hume thought it wrong to punish—whom Mr. Knight Hunt has elevated into political martyrs, and champions

of the press, calling Hetherington a "*quiet*, determined man," and talking of a "high tone" which he and his *collaborateurs* assumed. It may be well to bear in mind that the Government did not punish or even prosecute the *publication* of the seditious doctrines promulgated by these papers—it only sought to compel them to comply with the law, as other papers did, and to prevent their unjustly and illegally evading regulations which the *Times*, the *Spectator*, the *Examiner*, even the *Satirist*, and journals on both sides in politics, and of every shade of intensity, from the most bigoted Tory to the ultra Radical, uncomplainingly, if not willingly, complied with.

But some of our readers, after perusing the extracts we have made, as fair samples of the contents of "the unstamped," may share our opinion that the Government would have been justified in taking more active and more direct steps for the purpose of intercepting this poison before it got to the minds of the people. The sublime—the almost sacred cry of "The Liberty of the Press," is not to be idly raised by every foolish writer, or screamed by every traitorous wretch with the halter round his neck; not to be pleaded in mitigation of damages, by the malicious slanderer or the reckless libeller; not to be held up as a shield by the political firebrand, or the writer of sedition! It would soon lose its noble signification, and the respect which civilised men and nations pay it, if it were. Let its friends, therefore, be cautious lest they raise it too thoughtlessly; let noble hearts and generous minds beware lest, in raising their arm to intercept the just vengeance of the law upon it, they be screening, in reality, the worst, because the most insidious enemy of the most grand of our national bulwarks. Let them, in fine, distinguish between liberty and licentiousness, boldness and recklessness, public principle and mercenary mob-serving. Let them remember that the most wonderful cures in the healing art are often effected by combinations

of poison, which, by itself, no man of science would administer, and not stand up for the poison as the true and genuine agent of the cure.

"The liberty of the press: it is as the air we breathe—without it we die." Such is the old toast; but impregnate that air with carbonic acid gas, and you will as surely die as if you had not the air at all. Warmth is one thing—a blaze is another. "The liberty of the press!" Yes; the liberty of mind—of honesty of purpose—of morality, of decency, of justice, of order; but always remember, the machine of iron is but the symbol; discretion, honesty, virtue, go to form the Spirit which we all adore. "The Fourth Estate!" Let it have its privileges, but let it maintain its standing orders, too!

The *Republican* was believed to be written by a man of some talent, named Lorimer, and William Carpenter, the editor of the *Political Letter* (who, in 1831, was imprisoned on nonpayment of the penalty for publishing an unstamped), was also a person, we believe, of education; but the other illicit papers were written by men of no pretensions to a position either social or literary. The vendors, however, were the persons on whom the law fell most heavily, as they were the most tangible of the offenders. The authors, editors, or writers might be myths, for all the opportunity the Government had of laying hold on them; the publishers might shut their doors, and carry off their presses the back-way; but the street-hawker could be seized by the police, or the shop-keeping vendor summoned.

From the 12th of December, 1830, to the 12th of December, 1831, the number of persons convicted at the London police courts, and sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from seven days to three months, was, according to a parliamentary return, sixty-seven; from February, 1831, to February, 1832, it was one hundred and thirty-one; and from February, 1832, to March, 1833, it had increased to two hundred and fifty-four. And a

curious feature in these convictions was noticed and much commented on at the time—that the number of prosecutions under the Whig Government were more than double those ordered by their Tory predecessors.

Hetherington was first prosecuted on the 28th of September, 1831, and in default of paying a fine of 40*l.* was committed to the House of Correction for twelve months. His last conviction was on the 4th of August, 1834, when he was convicted in two penalties of 20*l.* each, for selling the *Twopenny Weekly Dispatch*, an unstamped paper. During those three years he was carrying on a systematic opposition and defiance of the laws; and the campaign has been recorded by Mr. Cooper, the author of the "Purgatory of Suicides." His first arrest was at night:—"He reached the door of his house on a night in September, knocked hard, but was not answered; the Bow Street spies came upon him before his second knock had been heard; he clung to the knocker, but was dragged away; and none of his family knew anything of the affair till they heard he had been lodged in Clerkenwell gaol. Here he remained six months." Another man, named Watson, was imprisoned with him, for a similar offence. Numerous other arrests followed. "Cleave and his wife were seized, as they were proceeding to Purkiss's, the news-agent, in Compton Street, in a cab, with their papers. Heywood, of Manchester, Guest, of Birmingham, Hobson and Mrs. Mann, of Leeds, with about five hundred others, in town and country, were imprisoned as dealers in the 'unstamped.' The spirit displayed by the vendors is worthy of remembrance. They carried the unstamped in their hats—in their pockets; they left them in sure places, to be called for; and when, for a few weeks, Government actually empowered officers to seize parcels, open them in the street, and take out any unstamped publications, Hetherington (while at large) made up "dummy" parcels, directed them, sent off a lad with them one way, with

instructions to make a noise, attract a crowd, and delay the officers if they seized him; meanwhile the real parcel for the country agent was sent off another way."

The personal story of Hetherington is thus continued:—"In 1833 Hetherington removed from 13, Kingsgate Street, to his well-known shop, 126, Strand. The *Destructive*, which he issued here, ironically styled the *Conservative*, was also unstamped. The *London Dispatch*, which followed, reached at one time 25,000 weekly. In 1834 he defended himself on a trial for publishing the (*Poor Man's*) *Guardian*, and obtained an acquittal, but was condemned for the *Conservative*. Not having grown fond of prison from his experiences of it, he took a house at Pinner, and by going out of his house in the Strand at the back, by an outlet into the Savoy, and by entering it in the same way, and in the disguise of a Quaker, he contrived to enact the character so well that he evaded the keen eyes that were on the look-out for him."

It should in justice be said, that many of the prosecutions were not instituted by the Government at all, but by common informers, without its knowledge or concurrence.

We have said these unstamped papers lent to the cause of stamp abolition the strongest of its arguments, for it was seen that the existing regulations enabled the man of no character and the trader of no reputation, the reckless incendiary, or the bankrupt printer, who did not care about the consequences of setting the law at defiance, to promulgate their dangerous opinions, whilst the more sound and sober-minded were unable to reach the ears of the same classes whom these men had addressed, because they were obliged to put a price upon their writings by nearly four times that of the original ribald publications which they desired to answer. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton (then Edward Lytton Bulwer) had this argument in view, and fixed his eye upon it throughout his brilliant and lucid appeal for the abolition of the stamp on June the

14th, 1832. He contends, too, that, having given the people political power by the Reform Bill, it is time the Government gave them political knowledge to guide them in exercising it discreetly; and he argues that it is necessary to destroy the monopoly of the four or five chief papers, or they would be as bad as the rotten boroughs which had just been done away with. In fact, he brings forward every point which has since been so often and, at last, so successfully dwelt upon; and some of the statistics on which he bases them are curious, even at the present day, when they have lost their application. He reckons that every paper pays 1*s.* 4*d.* a sheet in duty (at the rate of threepence per pound), 4*d.* for the stamp, and 3*s.* 6*d.* for each advertisement—equivalent, with the cost of printing and agency, to 5½*d.* on a sevenpenny paper, thus having only three half-pence for the remainder of its heavy expenses and for profits. The capital then required to establish a daily paper he estimates at thirty or forty thousand pounds. The effect of the stamp he shows by putting the English and American press side by side, and comparing them together. Liverpool, he says, with 165,175 inhabitants, has eight weekly papers—Boston, with only 70,000 inhabitants, has eighty newspapers. The price in America being one penny, and in England sevenpence, it followed that, in 1829, whilst Pennsylvania, with a population of 1,200,000, published weekly 300,000 newspapers, being at the rate of one paper to every fourth person, the United Kingdom only produced 630,000 copies weekly, which was at the rate of only one to every thirty-sixth inhabitant. Then, with regard to the advertisement duty, in one year, the twelve daily papers only of New York published 1,456,416 advertisements, whilst, in the same year, the whole of the four hundred papers of Great Britain and Ireland only contained 1,020,000 advertisements. This mighty difference is easily accounted for in the fact, that an advertise-

ment of twenty lines, published every day for an entire year in an English paper, would cost £202 16*s.*, whilst in New York it would only cost £6 18*s.* 8*d.* Mr. Bulwer proposed the total abolition of both the Stamp and Advertisement Duties, and, as a compensation to the revenue, suggested the reduction of the postage on newspapers to one penny if under two ounces and when passing through the General Post, and a halfpenny through the London Post. This reduction of postage, he reckons, would so increase the circulation of the newspapers, and by that means the Paper Duty paid by them, that the amount of the two Stamp Duties he proposed to abolish would be more than amply replaced by the increased Excise Duty.* It were useless and out of place here to follow him further and through all his arguments, because they were precisely those which found most favour in recent discussions which led to the result Mr. Bulwer then sought to effect. His motion was seconded by Daniel O'Connell in an unreported speech. Lord Althorp opposed it upon strictly financial grounds, declaring that the duties could not be spared; to which O'Connell replied, repeating all the arguments which had been used by Bulwer. Sir Charles Wetherall opposed it in consideration for the proprietors of the existing newspapers and the interests invested in them, which would have to sustain a ruinous competition, should the Stamp Duty be removed. Sir Matthew Ridley, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Strutt (now Lord Belper), Mr. Robinson, Mr. John (Lord) Campbell, and Mr. Henry Hunt, warmly concurring with Bulwer, yet advised him to postpone his motion on account of the advanced period of the session. And, although Colonel (Sir) De Lacy Evans urged its being brought to a division, its promoters withdrew it, rather than encounter the risk of its being lost, and an adverse decision appearing in the Journals of the House,

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xiii. (1832), p. 630.

when, in reality, the feeling on most sides was favourable to it, although it was doubted whether this were just the time to pass such a measure. Bulwer, however, pledged himself to bring forward his motion again in the first Reformed Parliament, should he have the honour of a seat in it.

Another cause was at work besides those mentioned by Bulwer, to prevent the free or extensive circulation of the newspapers by post. The abominable monopoly of the clerks of the roads was still in existence. The monstrous right which these officials possessed of forwarding all newspapers for their own benefit and advantage only, was secured to them by the 4th of George the Third (cap. 24, sec. 6), which also gave similar privileges to certain clerks of the Secretaries of State, who were allowed to frank newspapers through the post. But the power was taken away from the latter in the 9th George the Third, and a compensation of £1,500 (which was afterwards raised to £2,500) awarded to them. The clerks of the roads were, however, allowed to continue it; and although they had ceased to claim the *exclusive right* of passing newspapers through the post, they could still put such obstacles in the way of its passage by other hands, or such facilities in its way through their own, that the country gentlemen who were anxious for the early news generally got it through their agency. In 1832 there were eighteen clerks enjoying this privilege, and only drawing a nominal salary from the Post-office; and it was objected to the abolition of the practice, that if the right were taken away, their salaries would have to be increased! Such chandlering views of public matters were taken as recently as 1832!

The number of papers was, however, increasing in a faster ratio than the population; and although Bulwer was able to show such a vast difference by a comparison with the press of the United States, a marked improvement could be shown by a comparison with previous

periods in the history of the British press itself. Thus in 1782 there had only been published in these Isles one newspaper to 110,000 inhabitants; in 1821, there had been one to 90,000; and in 1832 there was one to every 55,000 of the population.*

* Partington's "British Cyclopædia," vol. iii. of History, Literature, &c. p. 94.

CHAPTER XII.

A PATRIOT" V. THE PUBLIC PRESS—FUDGE!—DEATH OF JOHN TAYLOR—JAMES CONWAY—GROWTH OF THE NEWS TRADE—THE NEWSVENDORS' PETITIONS—COMPLAINTS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS—CLOSED DOORS—HUME AND WARBURTON SEND REPORTS TO THE "TIMES"—THE "DUBLIN EVENING MAIL" STARTLES THE HOUSE—WHO IS THE TRAITOR?—O'CONNELL OPENS FIRE UPON THE PRESS—A PARADOX—THE REPORTERS FLY TO ARMS—THEIR TACTICS THROW O'CONNELL ABACK—HE COMPLAINS OF BREACH OF PRIVILEGE—SIR ROBERT PEEL'S TESTIMONY FOR THE REPORTERS—O'CONNELL WORSTED—THE LAST EFFORT OF DEFEATED MALICE—PARLIAMENTARY SUMMARIES—HORACE TWISS—THE "TRUE SUN" AND DANIEL WHITTLE HARVEY—"BOZ" SHINES UPON THE TOWN—CHARLES DICKENS AND THE "MORNING CHRONICLE"—W. J. FOX—DOUGLAS JERROLD AND LAMAN BLANCHARD—CHARLES MACKAY—THACKERAY—JAMES STUART—FALL OF THE "COURIER"—GEORGE HOGARTH—COVENTRY PATMORE—WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED—FRANCIS LUDLOW HOLT—REDUCTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT DUTY—ITS RESULTS—FOURSCORE ACTIONS FOR ONE LIBEL—AN EDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES—COLBURN V. PATMORE—SHACKELL V. ROSHER—ALEXANDER CHALMERS—STYLE OF NEWSPAPER WRITING—SPECIMENS—D'ISRAELI AND THE "GLOBE"—A PRETTY QUARREL AS IT STOOD—THE LETTERS OF "RUNNYMEDE"—LEGISLATION FOR THE PRESS—THE "WATCHMAN"—TESTIMONIAL TO MURDO YOUNG—LIBELS!

THE Courts of Law were occupied, about this time, with several trials connected with the press. In 1832, Henry Hunt, the member for Preston, brought an action against the *Liverpool Journal* for a libel reflecting on his conduct during a riot at Preston. Not content with a favourable verdict, he brought another action against the *Globe* for copying the article, and obtained damages. These trials present no features of interest; but the third action which he brought on the same libel—against the *True Sun*—which was tried on the 2d of December, 1833, displays

the "patriot" and lover of liberty in the garb of a pettifogging quibbler and an upstart tyrant. The *True Sun* had copied the paragraph which had appeared in the other two papers, but had appended, at the end of it, the word "Fudge!" This, one would take it, was meant to throw discredit upon the assertions of the libel, if not to positively contradict them; but Mr. Hunt would not see it in that light, and accordingly the case of Hunt *v.* Algar and another went on for trial, the plaintiff conducting his own case. The proprietors of the *True Sun* contended that by "fudge" they had meant to imply "Stuff of nonsense," or "We don't believe it;" but Hunt actually produced a string of witnesses to contradict this plea. He declared that "fudge" was a word not to be found in any English dictionary, and of which the meaning was not generally known; and produced, among others, a doctor of medicine, who gave the following startling opinions in evidence:—"He saw the word (fudge) in the libel, but did not know what it meant in the connexion in which it was used; and he considered that in the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' from which alone its authority was derived, it was used to express contempt for the character of the party speaking, and not as a contradiction of what was considered untrue." Lord Lyndhurst, not descending to these puerile details, simply directed the jury that if they thought the design of the libel was to injure Hunt, they must give a verdict for the plaintiff; if to vindicate him, for the defendants. The jury, stultified with the great "fudge" question, returned a verdict for the plaintiff, with the magnificent damages of one farthing.*

John Taylor, to whom we have before had occasion to allude in connexion with Mr. Jerdan and the *Sun* newspaper, died on the 30th of May, 1832. In addition

* Carrington and Payne's "Reports of Cases at Nisi Prius," vol. vi. pp. 245-8.

to the *Sun*, he had been associated with Bate Dudley on the *Morning Herald* about 1770, and was editor of the *Morning Post*, succeeding, we believe, Mr. Benjafield in that capacity, about 1812. He was also proprietor of the *True Briton*.* On the 31st of November in the same year died another busy journalist, James Conway, a native of Cork, who had been, for a period of twenty years, connected with the London press, and who, at the time of his death, was the Parisian correspondent of the *Times*.

The abuses of the system by which the clerks of the roads held in their hands the supply of the London papers to the country threatened to annihilate the trade of the newsvendors altogether. We have already shown the advantages which they possessed over the trade, but it was more fully brought under the notice of Parliament by a petition, presented by Sir H. Parnell to the House of Commons on the 28th of June, 1833, from the newsvendors of London, urging the unfairness of the privilege enjoyed by the Post-office clerks, and praying for its abolition. They had also, to the number of 110, sent up a petition, through the Bishop of London, to the House of Lords against the publication of newspapers on Sundays; and their servants had also had a petition presented on the same day (May 31st), through the same channel, and to the same effect. The news trade was growing apace—with the rapid increase of papers a new business had been called into existence, for they had to be distributed, and the trade was expanding, bursting through its old boundaries round the Royal Exchange, and settling itself in the by-ways of the city and the highways of the suburbs, in the shops of tobacconists, fruiterers, toymen, &c.; and this numerous body was now making itself heard. And it deserved to be—for it can-

* Taylor's "Records of My Life."

not be doubted that the establishment of this business throughout the metropolis tended much to facilitate the extension of knowledge, and brought the newspaper home to every one's door.

Serious complaints are heard about this time, principally coming from the House of Commons, of the inaccuracy of the parliamentary reports. Much of this arose from the badness of the accommodation vouchsafed to the reporters. In October, 1831, the House of Lords had made special provision for the press in a new gallery; but in the House of Commons they were situated in a position where hearing was difficult and writing nearly impossible. Under such circumstances, it was matter of wonder to many of the members how their speeches got reported at all; but others affected to believe that the mistakes which occasionally appeared were intentional, and with personal and offensive design. And this led to constant displays of temper and pettishness, and finally to the memorable conflict between Daniel O'Connell and the press.

The frequency of the skirmishes which preceded the great battle remind one of an earlier period. On the 31st of January, 1832, a complaint was made that the *Times* had published a report of proceedings of the House of Commons which took place whilst the doors were closed against strangers; and great surprise was expressed, not only at the hardihood of the act, but at the possibility of the *Times* getting the report at all: till Joseph Hume, and Warburton, then member for Bridport, acknowledged that they had themselves furnished the report. The House, not choosing to get into collision with its own members, then allowed the motion on its privilege to drop. On the 20th of February, Mr. Dawson complained of his speech being incorrectly reported, and Mr. Goulburn, of portions of his being suppressed, by the *Times*. On the 21st of May, Lord Stormont complained of the conduct of the press, especially of the violent remarks of the *Satirist*

of May 12th, reflecting on the King and Queen, the Duchess of Kent, and the Dukes of Cumberland and Wellington; and demanded to know why the Attorney-General allowed it; to which that functionary pleaded a general disinclination to prosecute the press. Sir Charles Wetherall and Sir Robert Peel both urged the prosecution of the paper, which Lord Althorp and Henry Hunt deprecated; and the debate closed without a result. On the 30th of the same month, Mr. Stanley complains of the *Dublin Evening Mail*, for publishing the report of a Tithe Committee of the House, before it had even been printed for the information of the members. It is declared a breach of privilege, and Sheehan, the editor and part proprietor of the paper, who happened to be in London, is ordered to attend. Refusing, respectfully but firmly, to divulge the source from which the information was derived, he is ordered into the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms. It at last appears, that through some irregularity or inattention of the lower door-keeper and a porter, one of the sealed drafts of the report had been lost, but how it came into Sheehan's hands was never discovered; and on the 1st of June he was called in, admonished by the Speaker, and discharged from custody. On the 20th of June, O'Connell, complained of a report which had appeared in the *Times*, and in which one of his speeches had been misrepresented; but on the 22d he expressed himself satisfied with an explanation which he had received. On the same day, Sir Henry Parnell complained of the *Morning Chronicle*, when several members took occasion to declare that the reports had been most incorrect and partial for the last twelve months. On the 27th of February, 1833, Lord Teynham complained in the House of Lords of some remarks in the *Standard*, but the Lord Chancellor and some other lords advised him not to carry the matter any further. On the 3d of June Lord Roden found fault with the reports in the *Times* as inaccurate;

and, on the 13th of June, the Marquis of Westmeath lodged his complaint, also in the House of Lords, against some remarks which had appeared in the *Dublin Evening Mail*. This would seem to indicate that the relations between the Parliament and the press were not just now of the most amicable character, for neither House had been in the habit, for some years previously, of bringing its quarrels with the papers before the public. The animosity seems to have culminated in O'Connell, who loudly declared his intention of giving battle to the press. He had, he said in the House of Commons, on the 25th of July, 1833, "procured from the Stamp-office a list of the journal proprietory of the metropolis, and he should wage war with them all till he defeated them—he would move, day by day, for their appearance at the bar of the House for breach of privilege."

The opening of the campaign nearly placed the House in a very awkward dilemma, for O'Connell's motion was to the effect that, inasmuch as the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle* had omitted certain portions of one of his speeches, Mrs. Anna Brodie and Mr. J. J. Lawson, as proprietors of the former paper, and Mr. W. J. Clement, as proprietor of the latter, had committed a breach of the privileges of the House, and should be brought to the bar accordingly. Lord Althorp pointed out to him the paradoxical character of the motion, which would force the House to punish or reprimand certain parties for not publishing what it held to be a breach of privilege to publish, and at the earnest solicitation of other members the motion was withdrawn. But in the course of his speech, O'Connell had attributed dishonest motives to the reporters for the suppression of his speeches, and the whole gallery now resented this insult. The reporters met, and signed a round robin which was published in the *Times*, and in which they made the following pledge:—"Without any wish to prejudice the interests of the establishments with which many

of us have been long connected, and to which all of us are sincerely attached, we have deliberately resolved not to report any speech of Mr. O'Connell, until he shall have retracted, as publicly as he made, the calumnious assertion that our reports are designedly false."

A loss of publicity would have been political bankruptcy to O'Connell: the determination of the reporters threatened him with total ruin. He had opened his game boldly, but he had not reckoned upon such a move as this, and at its very beginning he found himself almost check-mated. His cowardly attack upon the reporters in an assembly where they were precluded from replying to him or defending themselves, had forced them to adopt a course of retaliation for which he was unprepared and at which he was appalled. The weapon which it was dastardly to use lay temptingly naked before him, and he took it up in his desperation. On the 26th of July, he again complained to the House of the conduct of the reporters, and of the letter we have quoted in particular, and moved that the printer of the *Times* be ordered to attend at the bar for publishing it. He was determined, he said with a *quasi* disinterested regard for the honour and dignity of Parliament, "that the privileges of the House should not be trampled upon in his person. He had been accused of want of personal courage, but some members had a great want of moral courage, which prevented them from grappling with the press. There had even been a shrinking from it by the Government. There would be no difficulty about dealing with the individuals when they came to the bar, as the Speaker knew how to support the dignity of the House, and would be able to address them in the happiest terms." * Where is his love of the liberty of the press now? In any instance in which he was not personally concerned, had the Government attacked it, he would have been loud and eloquent

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xx. 3d Series (1833), pp. 911 *et seq.*

in denouncing the act of tyranny, despotism, and gagging (for hard words were always at his command); but here he stands actually invoking the interference of Government, and deprecating its tolerance and forbearance. And can we believe his professed apprehensions for the dignity of the House to be more sincere than his pretended love of the press? Not a whit! The press must not ruffle one of his feathers, but it might pluck any other member without his caring a straw. As if to complete this Hogarthian picture of consistency and sincerity, Hume, professor of equal anxieties for the liberty of the press, stands beside him, seconding his motion, whilst a number of members group round urging him to drop it. But the immaculate assertor of the privileges of Parliament stands inflexible as a Roman! it is a public duty he is performing —of course he does not allow his private feelings to sway him in the least: and on the 29th he renews the debate by moving the reading of the order for the attendance of the printer. As an amendment, Mr. Methuen moves, and Mr. Robinson seconds, a resolution that the order be discharged. O'Connell wrathfully declares that "the power possessed by the press at present is such as it ought not to possess." Figures step forward prominently from the background, to vindicate the press—figures whom the public eye still recognises at a glance: Colonel Evans, Sir Francis Burdett, Sir Robert Harry Inglis, Lord Althorp, Daniel Whittle Harvey; and at last there arises a greater than them all, Sir Robert Peel, who, in supporting Mr. Methuen's amendment, says, "I understand that there are thirty or forty reporters, some of them holding commissions in the army and navy, several at the bar, most of them having received an academical education, and occupying, therefore, the situation of gentlemen. They naturally feel sore at the imputation of designed, deliberate falsehood." He further bears his testimony to the independence of the reporters, "founded on an

experience of fifteen years in office." A division is called for, and O'Connell's unworthy attempt is defeated by 153 votes against 48, or a majority of 105 in a house of 201.

Still smaller and more paltry is the spirit in which he bears his defeat. Like the wasp, you may crush him, but he will sting you as he dies. Foiled with his weapon of privilege, he has recourse to another, still less chivalrous, the standing orders; and calling the Speaker's attention to the presence of strangers in the gallery, demands their exclusion, which the Speaker is obliged to order if required, and the reporters are, for the rest of the evening, shut out of the House.

O'Connell's enmity was principally directed against the *Times*—it is true that on the 6th and 10th of February, 1834, he made a skirmishing attack upon the *Examiner*: but, in the *Times* the vitality of the press was seated, and he hit hard blows upon the head of the obnoxious object. The Jove of the press hurled his thunder in return upon the infuriated member, and the struggle was fierce and deadly, for between O'Connell and Walter, the proprietor of the *Times*, there was a singularly bitter animosity. The result might have been foretold from the first. Like a worsted mastiff, O'Connell went from the fray torn and ragged, uttering something between a growl and a whine, —one man's talent, however loosened of restraint, can be no match against the recruited strength of twenty minds, coming up fresh to the charge daily, and each taking up a different point or manner of attack.

Of the general style of parliamentary reporting, there could now be no cause of complaint: the speeches were given very fully, and were at last found to grow to such massive proportions that few persons had leisure or inclination to go through them. A plan was then devised to put them before the public in a more readable form. Mr. Horace Twiss, formerly a member of the House, and the son

of Francis Twiss, formerly a writer in the *Morning Chronicle*, was the suggester of this scheme, and was at once employed to attend the gallery nightly, to seize the substance of the speeches, and to write a sort of summary, which, placed in the middle of the paper, gave at once prominence and perspicacity to the debates,—a plan which the other papers soon found it to their advantage to follow. Twiss was a man of clear intellect and shrewd perception, and for many years stripped the speeches of the verbiage in which they stood in the reports, and set the naked truths (or untruths) which were uttered, before the public. He was nephew, on his mother's side, of John Philip Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, and, after serving in an attorney's office for two or three years, entered himself of the Inner Temple and was duly called to the bar. He selected the Oxford circuit, of which he became a leader, but he withdrew from the practice of common law in a few years, and confined himself to the Courts of Equity. With an ambition for parliamentary distinction, he obtained a seat for Wootton Bassett; and some of his speeches in the House were considered so successful, that the Duke of Wellington, when called upon in 1828 to form a ministry, had an eye upon Mr. Twiss, and made him Under-Secretary for the Colonies. The borough for which he sat being disfranchised by the Reform Bill, the ultra Tory barrister looked round in vain for some time for a reformed constituency to return him to Parliament, till at length Bridport gave him admission for a short time, but soon rejected him, and he appealed to Nottingham, Bury, and other places in vain. His parliamentary career was at an end; and, too honest and consistent to abjure the principles which were his obstruction, or to plunge into those which would have floated him in, he turned his attention to the press. In addition to the parliamentary summary, he occasionally wrote the leaders of the *Times*, and was the author of the "Life of Lord Eldon," and some lighter compositions, which combined

evidence of talent seconded the recommendations of the late Lord Granville Somerset, and got him the post of Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He died suddenly on the 25th of April, 1848, in the act of delivering a speech at a meeting of the Rock Assurance Company, at Radley's Hotel, Blackfriars. Mr. Tyas succeeded him as the condenser of the reports for the *Times*.

A fierce and bitter warfare had, we have said, broken out in the ranks of the evening papers—the *Sun* had exploded; it was rent in twain, and there were two orbs rolling in the firmament and threatening annihilation to each other. The seceders from the *Sun* had set up the *True Sun*, and the public were invoked to take part in the angry quarrel. For years the strife was carried on, and the *True Sun* displayed some rays which shed a light even now. Founded by Patrick Grant, with William Carpenter for sub-editor, it numbered Laman Blanchard and Leigh Hunt among its writers. But on the 2d of December, 1833, Patrick Grant the proprietor, John Algar the printer, and Bell the publisher, were tried for a libel upon Henry Hunt "the blacking-maker," as we have already recorded; and this trial, and the opposition of the *Sun*, and the recklessness of its conductors, plunged it into difficulties, and about this time it passed into the hands and under the editorship of Daniel Whittle Harvey, who was no more fortunate with it than his predecessors had been. Towards the close of its career, Mr. W. J. Fox, late M.P. for Oldham, was its editor; but the brightest atom which went to form this luminary was Charles Dickens, who commenced his parliamentary reporting for the columns of the *True Sun*. Dickens' father, Mr. John Dickens, had sat in the gallery before him. Originally employed in the Navy Pay department, he was pensioned off at the close of the war, and coming to London became a newspaper reporter. He had designed that son who was destined to be so illustrious, for the law, but the gallery claimed him, and, after serving

in the staff of the *True Sun*, he went into the service of the *Morning Chronicle*, which he soon made immortal by contributing to its evening edition those articles which were afterwards collected together under the title of "Sketches by Boz."

W. J. Fox, on the breaking up of the *True Sun* establishment, joined the *Weekly Dispatch*. He is the son of a small farmer, and was born near Wreatham, in Suffolk, in 1786. He was educated at Homerton College, under Dr. Pye Smith, for a Nonconformist minister, but adopted the principles of the Unitarians, amongst whom he is a favourite preacher, and, in 1847, was returned to Parliament for Oldham.

By this time Douglas Jerrold was established upon the press, and possibly was attached with his friend Blanchard to the *True Sun*. Certainly they had fallen together. The son of the manager of the Sheerness theatre, Jerrold was born in the dirty, bustling, water-side town. Imbibing salt water tastes from the associations of his birthplace, he resolved upon going to sea, and his father, by some dockyard influence, got him a berth as midshipman; but, in a year or two, he sickened of the profession, and was then apprenticed of his own choice to a printer. In this business he found Laman Blanchard, a fellow-apprentice. With him he went one night to hear the opera of Der Freischutz, on its first appearance, and wrote a review of it, which he dropped into the letter-box of the newspaper on which he worked as compositor, and next day he found himself engaged in setting it in type, as well as an inquiry for the author in the Notices to Correspondents. Revealing himself, he was given more congenial work upon the paper, and commenced writing those dramas, which, beginning with "Black-Eyed Susan," have left him the reputation of a wit, and led him on to the successful management of the little Strand theatre, and the disastrous speculation of ruinous Drury Lane. His later connexions

with the newspaper press were in the foundation of *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, which proved unfortunate, and the editing of the twopenny paper, *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, which was a success. His son, Blanchard Jerrold, succeeded him in the latter post.

Charles Mackay came into the newspaper world in 1834. Although born at Perth in 1812, he was brought to London in his infancy, and subsequently educated in Belgium. A volume of poems which he published in 1834 drew upon him the attention of Black of the *Morning Chronicle*, who gave him employment upon that paper for about nine years. In September, 1844, Mackay became editor of the *Glasgow Argus*, in which post he remained for three years. Returning to London, he contributed the "Voices from the Crowd" to the *Daily News* on its first appearance, and afterwards became associated with the *Illustrated London News*, of which he has written the leading articles for some years. He is now an LL.D., and is the first song-writer of our age, whilst his "Hope of the World" and other works give him a high standing as a poet.

Perhaps Thackeray was now writing for the *Times*: it is generally said that he contributed Essays to it in the time of Barnes. Certainly a few years later—in the early days of the *Britannia* weekly paper—we find sketches in that journal with the well-known signature of "Michael Angelo Titmarsh."

James Stuart, no relation of Daniel Stuart, the old proprietor of the paper, was now editor of the *Courier*. He was eldest son of the Rev. Dr. Charles Stuart, and was closely connected with the Moray family. Bred to the law, he was, in 1798, a writer to the Signet, but abandoned his profession on inheriting some property in Fifeshire, devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, and became a country gentleman and county magistrate. Mingling warmly in the political excitement of the time,

he paid too little attention to his own concerns: his affairs fell into a bad state—he sought to redeem them by speculation, but went down in the panic of 1825. Appalled by his ruin, he fled to America, and after a short stay returned, procured a discharge from his creditors, and was appointed editor of the *Courier*, in which capacity he worked hard for the Whig cause, and was rewarded during the administration of Lord Melbourne with the situation of Inspector of Factories. Stuart died of disease of the heart, in 1849, in his seventy-fourth year. It was by his hand, and in a duel arising out of the political excitement of the times, that Sir Alexander Boswell fell; but this occurred years before Stuart had become a journalist.

On his secession from the *Courier*, his place was filled by Edward Laman Blanchard, who continued to occupy it till the paper changed its politics on its sale to the Tory party, when he resigned, and, in a few years, that once good property the *Courier* newspaper had become valueless.

George Hogarth, so well known for his History of Music and his writings on the English musical stage, and who has the honour of calling himself father-in-law of Charles Dickens, had left Edinburgh, where he had been a writer to the Signet, was now, and for several years, dramatic and musical critic of the *Morning Chronicle*; and Coventry Patmore, the Quaker poet, was the editor of the *Court Journal*, a fashionable paper just founded by Mr. Henry Colburn, the publisher. Mr. Patmore is a native of Woodford, and was born, says "Men of the Time," in 1823. If so, he was just ten years old when he occupied this important post (!!). So much are those gossiping, prying memoirs of living celebrities to be relied on which profess to cater to the information of "outsiders," and to give them the height of the bodies, the girth of the waists, and the length of the noses, instead of assisting them to measure and fathom the minds of

the great ones of their generation. Twaddle for tea-tables—for gents who, sick over their first cigars, and giddy in their first polkas, fancy they are knowing about the town and the world, when they drawl out all these paltry details to the admiration of the simpering miss from school, who, in her turn, fancies that Frederick or Augustus must mix in *recherché* society to pick up all these little bits of scandal.

And we are reminded that this is the place and now the time to correct an error into which a laborious and useful writer has fallen. Mr. Timperley, in an allusion to the gifted Mackworth Praed,* has stated that he was editor of the *Morning Post*. This we are now enabled on the best authority to contradict; Praed never had, at any period, the least to do with the management of the paper. He was a brilliant contributor to it, and it was about this very period that he was obliged to lay down the pen which had dropped gems upon the pages of periodicals and newspapers. Honours were crowding on him—prosperity lifted him along—but health was failing, and Death stood grimly smiling, sure of his prey. It was the old story—the sword was wearing through the scabbard. There were the playful fancy, the restless mind, the heroic heart—and the hectic cheek, the bright eye, and consumption.

Winthrop Mackworth Praed was born in London in 1802, the son of Serjeant Praed, one time chairman of the Audit Office,† and, according to his American biographer, Mr. Greswold, was connected with the family of Praed the eminent London bankers. At a very early age he was sent to Eton, where he associated with H. N. Coleridge, John Moultrie, and other kindred spirits, and, in conjunction with the latter, set up "The Etonian," a periodical which, in a collected form, afterwards went through four

* Timperley's "Dictionary of Printers and Printing."

† Gentleman's Magazine, vol. vii. N. S. (1839), p. 319.

editions. He was afterwards removed to Trinity College, Cambridge, and there he carried away an unprecedented number of prizes for Greek and Latin odes and epigrams, and English poems. Among them were, (1823) the Chancellor's Medal for "Australasia," a poem: (1824) the same for "Athens," a poem. "*Epigrammata*," "*Carmen Græcum*," &c. were also prize poems. On leaving Cambridge, he became associated with Hookham Frere, T. B. Macaulay (Lord Macaulay), and others in "Knight's Quarterly Magazine," and also wrote lyrics in the "New Monthly;" and, on May 29th, 1829, he was called to the bar, of the Middle Temple. Up till this time, he had been a Liberal in politics, but he now adopted Conservative opinions, and contributed to the *Morning Post*. In 1831, he was returned to Parliament for St. German's; but putting up for St. Ives, in the election for the reformed Parliament of 1832, he was unsuccessful, but in 1835 was returned for Yarmouth. In 1837, he shifted to Aylesbury, for which he was returned. From December, 1834, to April, 1835, he was Secretary of the Board of Control. But his health now began to decline, and being somewhat too fond of social indulgences, into which he was greatly led by his companionable qualities, it became so seriously impaired that, in 1838, he was obliged to retire into private life, and he died on the 15th of July, 1839, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, in the promise of a brilliant and successful career. He was Deputy High Steward of Cambridge University, and Recorder of Barnstaple, and the door of honours was fairly open to him, when illness forbade his entering and grasping them.*

Francis Ludlow Holt, about this time, or a little earlier, was writing the leaders of the *Weekly Dispatch*. He was a barrister by profession, and, in 1804, published "The

* Biographical Introduction prefixed to "Lilian, and other Poems, by W. M Praed, now first collected by R(ufus) W. G(riswold)." New York, 1852.

Land we live in;" and, in 1815, a treatise on "The Law of Libel."

Although Parliament had refused the boon to the newspaper proprietors which Bulwer had proposed to give them, in a reduction or abolition of the stamp, it partially relieved them of the pressure of the Advertisement Duty. By the 4th and 5th William the Fourth, cap. 23, the duty on advertisements was reduced from 3*s.* 6*d.* each to 1*s.* 6*d.* in England, and 1*s.* in Ireland. Just before this law was passed, the duty paid by the whole of the provincial press of Great Britain from the 5th of January, 1832, to the 4th of January, 1833, was £70,965. Just after it, 1,110,000 advertisements, paying a duty of 1*s.* 6*d.* or three-sevenths of the old duty, yielded to the revenue for one year £83,250. In 1834, a reciprocity act was passed, which tended indirectly to the advantage of the English press. By the Newspaper Postage Act of that year foreign papers from any country where British journals circulated free of postage were allowed to enter England also free.

Immediately preceding these important changes, the number of papers published in the United Kingdom was as follows:—ENGLAND: *in London*, daily, 13; twice or thrice a week, 6; weekly, 36: *provincial*, 180. SCOTLAND: twice or thrice a week, 15; weekly, 31. IRELAND: *in Dublin*, daily, 5; three times a week, 7: *provincial*, 57. BRITISH ISLANDS: twice a week, 2; weekly, 11. Total for the Kingdom, 369. One noticeable feature in the return, is, that whereas Dublin at this time possessed five papers daily, the "modern Athens," the capital of Scotland—in fact, the whole of Scotland, could not produce one. The number of papers passing through all the Post-offices of Great Britain and Ireland in 1833 was 41,600,000; whilst the number of stamps issued was 44,500,000. The entire produce of the Newspaper Duties for the year was £533,000.

Some curious instances of the undue pressure of the

Law of Libel upon the newspaper press occurring at this period deserve to be recorded. In September, 1832, one John Dreas, an attorney, recovered three hundred pounds damages and costs from the proprietors of the *Satirist* newspaper for a libel. We dare say the proprietors deserved to be made to pay—for the *Satirist* was an infamous paper, trading in slander, and living by extortion—and, on the 11th of February, 1833, it was again convicted of accusing a gentleman named Digby of cheating at cards;* but, in June, 1833, Dreas brought another action for the same libel against Warne, a newsvendor, for selling the paper. The case was tried at Croydon Assizes, and the plaintiff got ten pounds damages and eighty-five pounds costs. In another action against a newsvendor named Godwin, he recovered five pounds damages and eighty-five pounds costs for the same offence. Prepared to go through the trade, he served no less than eighty-four notices of action upon parties for selling copies of the paper which contained the libel, most of whom, no doubt, had not even been aware of its existence; but a meeting of newsvendors being held at the Lyceum Theatre on the 4th of December, 1833, at which one of the parties threatened with prosecution, Onwhyn of Catharine-street, announced his determination of defending the action, the whole of the notices were withdrawn, and the proceedings abandoned. So extensive was the range of the Law of Libel, that there can be little doubt but that the attorney might have recovered damages from every person who sold the paper—nay, it is even questionable whether we may not add from any person even *lending* it to another—as being concerned in a greater or lesser degree in publishing the libel. In the course of some remarks made by O'Connell in the House of Commons on the 18th of February, 1834, touching the state of the Law of Libel, the following opinion is deliberately enunciated:—"If one

* Barnewall and Adolphus' "Reports," vol. iv. pp. 821-6.

gentleman handed a newspaper to another in a club-house, and it contained a libel, he defied any lawyer to prove that, under the existing laws, he could not be indicted for a libel." This is not saying he could be convicted; but the law was very comprehensive, and might have been stretched without much trouble to embrace such a case.

Another case, presenting a curious, and, we believe, until that time, unparalleled feature, was decided in the Courts of Law, and must be quoted as a precedent in what may be termed the law of newspapers. A libel upon the Duchess of Richmond was copied from the *Court Journal* into the *Observer*, and Mr. Clement, the proprietor of the latter paper, was fined a hundred pounds in the Court of King's Bench on the 7th of May, 1833, although he had tendered an apology, which had been refused by the Duchess. An action was then brought against Mr. Colburn, the proprietor of the paper in which the libel had originally appeared, and damages were recovered; and, on the 13th of February, 1834, Mr. Colburn sought, in the Court of Exchequer, to recover from his editor, Coventry Patmore, the costs and damages which he had had to pay. The responsibility of the editor was denied, and a novel argument took place, but the jury gave the proprietor the damages he sought, in all £193. But the question of responsibility being reserved for the consideration of the judges, was determined against the plaintiff, by a slip in the pleading, the Court being of opinion, that it was consistent with the statement in the declaration, that the plaintiff, though he did not know of the original insertion of the libel, might afterwards have knowingly and wilfully permitted it to be printed, and so have been convicted in consequence of his own criminal act, and not of that of the defendant. But, during the argument, the question whether a newspaper proprietor, convicted and fined in consequence of the publication of a libel by his editor without his knowledge or consent, could main-

tain an action for indemnity was elaborately discussed at the bar, and the Court, in delivering judgment, expressed a strong opinion that he could not. "I am not aware," said Lord Lyndhurst (Chief Baron), "of any case in which a man, convicted of an act declared by law to be criminal and punished for it accordingly, has been suffered to maintain an action against the party who participated with him in the offence, in order to procure indemnity for the damages occasioned by that conviction; but, after hearing the argument, I entertain little or no doubt that such an action could not be maintained."*

A somewhat similar case was tried in the Court of Common Pleas in the next year—Shackell *v.* Rosher—in which the proprietors of the *John Bull* sought to recover from the defendant damages and costs to which they had been put in an action for libel brought against them by one Patrick Chalmers, whom they had falsely accused of the crime of forgery on information the truth of which was guaranteed by the present defendant. The damages sought to be obtained were £30 damages in the previous action, £30 Chalmers' costs, and £300 Shackell's costs. The case was tried on the 4th of July, 1835, and damages given to the amount of £300.†

A name, honourable in every walk of life, was left to do credit to newspaper history, in 1834, by the death of Alexander Chalmers, the biographer. He was the youngest son of a journalist, James Chalmers, the founder of the *Aberdeen Journal*, and was born at Aberdeen on the 29th of March, 1759. After completing his education for the medical profession, he obtained a situation as surgeon on board a vessel bound for the West Indies, and went to Portsmouth to join her, but suddenly relinquishing his intention, he returned to London, and by some means

* Willes and Keating's "Smith's Leading Cases," Vol. i. p. 130.

† Bingham's "New Cases in the Court of Common Pleas," vol. ii. p. 634.

became associated with George Robinson, the bookseller of Paternoster-row, through whose acquaintance he was introduced to the press. He was long connected with the *General Advertiser*, and afterwards with the *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Morning Chronicle;* and was for some time editor of the *Morning Herald*. His principal work is his "General Biographical Dictionary," a standard authority, in thirty-two volumes. Chalmers lost his wife (the daughter of John Gillott, a London printer, whom he had married in 1783, and to whom he was fondly attached) in June, 1816. He himself died in London, on the 10th of December, 1834, aged seventy-five. He was an F. S. A. at the time of his death, and left behind him a valuable library, rich in every department of literature, and a name not more exalted in the annals of learning than in the records of probity, honesty, and worth.

The style of the newspapers of this period, although vastly improved upon that of former times, would startle those who are accustomed to the more subdued tone and calmer language of modern newspaper controversy. It is true it was strong, bold and vigorous, but it was coarse, and sometimes even low. We are not speaking of the cheap, or even the weekly press alone: the leading papers indulged in a strain of vituperation, which has for some years been abandoned in political warfare. We remember the *Times*, commenting on Lord Macaulay's too flippant address to his constituents, dated from Windsor Castle, with attempted humour equally reprehensible, called the then member for Edinburgh "Mr. Babbletongue Macaulay," in a poor play upon his second name of Babington; we call to mind a dreary personal attack in the same paper upon Mr. John Temple Leader, the member for Westminster, in which it is said that *his* second name was borrowed from a gin-shop which his father must have kept: and we cannot forget the foul depths of invective which were stirred up by both combatants in the long

strife between O'Connell and the *Times*. The *soubriquet* habitually given by that paper to its enemy was "the big beggar man," and by this name it spoke of him in all its leading articles. The prejudices of the same paper against Queen Adelaide for her supposed Tory sympathies, find vent on the 15th of June, 1834, in announcing the fall of the Cabinet which Earl Grey had abandoned and Lord Melbourne had essayed to guide, in the following pithy sentence:—"The Whig Ministers are out—the Queen has done it all!"*

The quarrel between D'Israeli and the *Globe*, which had accused him of having tried to get into Parliament as a joint of O'Connell's tail, was productive of a style of altercation of which some specimens deserve to be preserved. The *Times* of December 28th, 1835, publishes D'Israeli's letter in reply to the *Globe*, which he says "tosses its head with all the fluttering indignation and affected scorn of an enraged and supercilious waiting-woman. It is the little Duke of Modena of the press, and would rule Europe with its sceptre of straw, and declare a general war by the squeak of a penny trumpet." "An anonymous writer," he says, "should, at least, display power. When Jupiter hurls a thunderbolt, it may be mercy in the god to veil his glory with a cloud; but we can only view with feelings of contemptuous lenity the mischievous varlet, who pelts us with mud as we are riding by, and then hides behind a dust-hole." In the *Times* of the 31st, another letter is published, in which the rival editor is called "An obscure animal;" "the thing who concocts the meagre sentences, and drivels out the rheumy rhetoric of the *Globe*." On the 9th of January, 1836, the controversy is followed up by a letter, more violent still, in which the writer says: "It is not, then, my passion for notoriety that has induced me to

* Guizot's "Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel," p. 70.

tweak the editor of the *Globe* by the nose, and to inflict sundry kicks upon the baser parts of his base person—to make him eat dirt, and his own words fouler than any filth; but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon—what a craven dullard—what a literary scarecrow—what a mere thing stuffed with straw and rubbish, is the *soi disant* director of public opinion, and official organ of Whig politics." We do not believe the journalist could now be found in England who would admit this ribald abuse of a fellow-editor into his columns—certainly he would be excluded from the pale of newspaper society if he did: it is after the genuine and approved American fashion, which is no longer in favour here.

A series of letters shortly afterwards appeared in the *Times*, signed "Runnymede," which were in professed imitation of "Junius's Letters," but which could only be compared to them in point of violence and personality. These letters were also written by D'Israeli, and contained fierce and unscrupulous attacks upon Lord Melbourne's Government. Lord John Russell is called "an infinitely small scarabæus—an insect;" Palmerston and Grant, "two sleek and long-tailed rats;" and Lord William Bentinck (who had just returned from the Government of India), "one of those mere lees of debilitated humanity and exhausted nature which the winds periodically waft to the hopeless breezes of their native cliffs;"—"a drivelling Nabob, of weak and perplexed mind and grovelling spirit." The appearance of the Marquis of Lansdowne is described as "the ox-like form of the Lansdowne Apis," and O'Connell as "towering, like a crocodile, above them all." These letters were, in August, 1836, reprinted in a volume entitled, "The Letters of Runnymede," and dedicated to the late Sir Robert Peel, so that they cannot be supposed to have shocked the public taste of the time, or to have been much out of the common way of newspaper controversy.

Two Acts were added in 1835 to the laws for regulating the press. On the 25th of March, a Bill was passed to amend the 30th George the Third, chapter 78, "for preventing the mischiefs arising from the printing, &c. of newspapers by persons not known;"* and, on the 9th of September, another for preventing newspapers from giving reports of lectures delivered at literary and other institutions, without the previous consent of the lecturer.†

The object of the first of these was to relieve the newspaper press from the oppression of the common informers, out of whose hands it took the power of sueing for penalties incurred by non-fulfilment of the conditions of the old Act, and provided that "no actions for penalties be commenced, except in the name of the Attorney or Solicitor-General in England, of the King's Advocate in Scotland, or of the Solicitor or Officer of Stamps." This Act was the offspring of the Committee which had been formed in 1834, to consider the existing state of the Law of Libel, and at once took the sting out of those hornets who had been buzzing about the heads of the newspaper proprietors and printers, causing them endless pain and annoyance, harassing them with threats, and obstructing them with extortions. The second Act was only just to the increasing and improving class of lecturers, and was framed to secure to them the right of property in their unwritten thoughts and opinions, which the author already possessed.

The Wesleyan body set up a newspaper of their own this year, and the first number of the *Watchman*, the organ of that sect, made its appearance on the 7th of January, 1835.

It should also be recorded to the honour of newspaper enterprise that, on March the 28th, Mr. Murdo Young, the proprietor of the *Sun*, was presented with two testimonials—one from the tradesmen of Sheffield, and another

* 5 William IV. chapter 2. † 5 & 6 William IV. chapter 65.

from Manchester—for "expressing" to those towns, the result of the election for the Speakership of the House of Commons, "with so much expedition."

Finally, among the events of this year, may be recorded the trial of the action, Creevy *v.* Carr, before Mr. Baron Gurney, on the 18th of June. The defendant had published a libel in the *Morning Advertiser*, accusing the plaintiff of arson, and the jury called upon to assess the amount to which the plaintiff's character had been damaged by the charge, estimated it at one shilling.* The plaintiff had previously got damages from the *Weekly Dispatch* for a similar libel.

* Carrington and Payne's "Reports," vol. vii. p. 64.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STAMP DUTY TOTTERING—THE LAST PROSECUTION OF THE UNSTAMPED—CONFUSION OF THE STAMP ACTS—SPRING RICE PROPOSES THEIR CONSOLIDATION—SUSPICIONS OF FAVOURITISM—SIR CHARLES KNIGHTLY OBSTRUCTS—HIS HORROR OF THE NEWSPAPERS—THE BILL PASSED, AND THE STAMP DUTY REDUCED TO A PENNY—PROVISIONS OF THE ACT—ILLIBERAL LIBERALS—DEFINITION OF A NEWSPAPER—VAGUE APPREHENSIONS—OPPOSITION OF THE UNSTAMPED—THEIR FALL—EFFECTS UPON THE REVENUE—STATISTICS—BIRTH OF NEW PAPERS—THE "CONSTITUTIONAL"—A PROMISING STAFF—THORNTON HUNT—THE NEW ATTEMPT FAILS, AND THE "PUBLIC LEDGER" RE-APPEARS—IS A NEWSPAPER LIABLE TO PROSECUTION FOR A BONA FIDE ADVERTISEMENT?—OR FOR REPORTS OF THE COURTS OF LAW?—QUACKERY AGAINST THE PRESS—THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" V. "THE AGE"—THE "TIMES" AND SIR JOHN CONROY—BREACHES OF PRIVILEGE—WAKLEY IN A PET—THE ABOLITION OF THE DUTY PROPOSED—BUT REFUSED—ADVERTISEMENTS OF INSOLVENTS.

ANOTHER stride in the progress of the newspaper press is at hand—the fourpenny stamp can no longer be sustained against the force of public opinion. In the course of the session which closed in May, 1835, there had been presented to the House of Commons against this impost 142 petitions, containing 57,848 signatures; on the 11th of February, 1836, a deputation of thirty Members of Parliament and others, headed by Dr. Birkbeck, went up to Lord Melbourne to request the total abolition of the stamp duty; and at a large dinner given to Mr. Wakley by his constituents of Finsbury, "The Repeal of the Stamp Duty on Newspapers" was the second toast of the evening, and was drank with the wildest enthusiasm.

During Earl Grey's administration there had been 728 prosecutions against the sellers of unstamped newspapers,

of which 219 had occurred in the year 1835; but on the 5th of February, 1836, the last conviction of the unstamped took place, when John Cleave was fined in the Court of Exchequer five hundred pounds for publishing five numbers of a newspaper called the *Weekly Police Gazette;* and on the 15th of September the stamp duty upon newspapers was reduced to one penny. This important measure was for six months under consideration of Parliament. It was on the 15th of March that Mr. Spring Rice (afterwards Lord Monteagle), then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reply to questions from Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey and Mr. Wakley, first revealed to the House of Commons the plan of his proposed alteration. The various Stamp Acts (of which there were one hundred and fifty, all passed in and since the reign of Charles the Second, when the first stamp was imposed), were to be consolidated. The bewildering mass, lying scattered about here and there, and up and down the statute book, was to be swept away, and something like an intelligible system of Stamp Duties framed in its place. Laws relating to Stamps were to be picked out from the nooks and corners of old Acts of Parliament in which they were concealed and had been smuggled through the House in old times, when people didn't like the idea of stamps and looked upon them as brands or badges of slavery, and to be put into a code by themselves; and whilst they were undergoing this process, it was projected to consider what reductions or alterations should be made in them. On the 12th of April it came to the turn of the newspaper stamp, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Bill for regulating it was read a second time. The most objectionable feature in it was a return to the restrictions as to the size of the newspaper sheet, which had been left undefined by Mr. Huskisson in 1825, but which the new Bill now proposed to limit to 43 inches by 34, or a superficial surface of 1530 inches. Singularly enough these were found to be the exact dimensions of the

Morning Chronicle, and of that paper only—a journal which was the avowed organ of the ministry, but had not yet followed the example of the other morning papers of issuing a double sheet; and, on April the 25th, Lord Lyndhurst, in the House of Lords, and on May the 3d, Mr. Goulburn in the House of Commons, presented petitions from the proprietors of the *Times,* the *Morning Herald,* the *Morning Post,* and the *Standard,* complaining of this seeming act of favouritism, and showing that it would be impossible for them to conform to the regulations without altering the whole of their machinery for publishing double sheets. On the 20th of June the Bill came into committee, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved, "That it is expedient that the duty now payable be reduced, and that the duty paid and payable upon every sheet whereon a newspaper is printed shall in future be one penny, subject to such provisions respecting the size of newspapers and the printing of supplements as may hereafter be deemed advisable." Whereupon Sir Charles Knightly proposes as an amendment that the duty on soap should be removed instead. Some of the arguments brought forward against the reduction of the stamp must appear curious at the present time, and serve to show in how few years the ideas and ways of thinking of a nation change. In setting up the soap duty against the newspaper duty, Sir Charles Knightly asks, "How could he ask a man for his vote who was enabled to say to him, 'Instead of giving me the opportunity of getting clean hands for myself, and clean garments for my wife and daughters of a Sunday, you give me at a low price a parcel of dirty newspapers?'" He had gone, he says, to the Post-office on the previous Saturday night from curiosity to see the mails, and he found them so heavily laden that it was hardly safe to travel by them. He had asked one of the guards what was the reason of this, and the guard told him it was owing to the quantity of newspapers, *which distressed the*

horses exceedingly. We should like to take the worthy Baronet, if still living, to the inside of the Post-office some evening, while the sacks of newspapers are being shot in, to see the avalanche which pours upon the floor, and let him laugh at his own prediction,—"If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was right in saying that the penny stamp would produce quite as much as the present stamp, then the quantity of newspapers must be more than trebled, and if so, *there must be a tax raised for their conveyance.*" The Chancellor of the Exchequer had estimated the loss to the revenue at £125,000, but this he considers far too low a figure. Mr. Charles Barclay seconded the amendment, enunciating the following startling argument: "Every individual to whom Parliament had given the franchise already possessed ample power of reading the papers, whether at the public-house, beer-shops, or coffee or public reading-rooms." So it was of no political or social consequence that a man should have an opportunity of reading the newspaper at home—that he should not be driven to the public-house or the beer-shop to get the news? Why, apart from fiscal considerations and in its bearing upon morals and manners, this was the most favourable thing that could be said of the measure—that it would extend the circle of newspaper reading beyond the sanded floors of the parlour and the taproom, and enable it to take in the home fireside and the family circle. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, and, looking at the question from a purely financial point of view, shows that there were sufficient indications of a falling off in the duty to demand an alteration that would check the downward tendency. In 1831 the duty amounted to £483,000, whilst, in 1832, it had fallen to £473,000; in 1833, to £445,000; in 1834, to £441,000; and, slightly reviving in 1835, was now £455,000. This argument was somewhat weakened by Mr. Goulburn's reply denying that the duty was falling off, inasmuch as 1831 was an exceptional year, being a year

of great public excitement, and insisting that it must be judged by the average of five years, which would show for the five years ending 1825, an average of £398,000: 1830, £413,000: and 1835, £464,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer further maintains that high duties always encourage contraband trading, and that, were the stamp duty reduced, the unstamped papers would disappear; and declares that within the last few months one hundred and ten persons had been convicted for selling unstamped newspapers in shops, and three hundred for selling them in the streets, and yet the trade was on the increase. Goulburn and Lord Sandon oppose the measure in the fear that it will tend to depreciate the character of the press, and Charles Buller, Silk Buckingham, and Roebuck support it. The chief representative of the newspaper interests in the House of Commons, Mr. Walter, the principal proprietor of the *Times*, of course opposes a proposal to open the door to competition. After a stormy personal altercation between Mr. Kearsley, the member for Wigan, and Mr. Roebuck, the House affirms the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposition by 241 to 208, or a majority of 33. In the other stages of its consideration in committee, the Bill undergoes only a few unimportant alterations, and on July 25th it passes the House of Commons by a majority of 55 to 7. In the course of its consideration on July the 18th, Sir Robert Harry Inglis had raised the question of newspaper copyright, and anticipating, reasonably enough, that the cheap papers would pirate the dearly-obtained information or highly-paid articles of their first-class contemporaries, asked whether any provision had been made in the Bill for securing the copyright of leading articles, articles of intelligence, reports of parliamentary proceedings, &c. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that the subject had been under consideration, and that the editors of the leading journals had been invited to state their views upon it, but that the draft of the Bill they had sent in was so imperfect

that the law officers of the Crown could not propose it to the House.

But although the Bill had passed the House of Commons, the reduction of the Stamp Duty was not yet effected. It stuck in the throats of the House of Lords, and was coughed out again. Lord Melbourne introduced it on the 8th of August, and grounded its claims principally upon the growth of the unstamped press. Notwithstanding that in the last four or five years, he said, eight hundred to a thousand persons had been committed for selling unstamped papers, yet, in the last twelve months only, the sale had increased from fifty thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand! The first ten clauses of the Bill got safely through, but the eleventh, requiring that the name, address, occupation, and amount of interest of each and every proprietor or part proprietor of a newspaper should be registered at the Stamp Office half yearly, and that all transfers of shares or interest in newspapers should be immediately made known there, was objected to by Lord Lyndhurst as being too inquisitorial; and that and the next clause being rejected by 61 votes over 48, the Bill was returned to the Commons on the 10th for amendment. This delay threw out the dates for the proposed arrangements, and a new Bill had to be prepared extending the time for its coming into operation by a fortnight; and the Bill with these alterations passed the House of Lords on the 11th of August, and, on the 15th of September, 1836, it took the place of the old laws of the 38th George the Third, and the Stamp Duty upon newspapers returned to the amount at which it had been fixed on its first imposition, a century and a quarter before. The alterations in the interval, or rather since the accession of George the Third to the throne, had been gradually working upwards. From 1760 to 1789 the duty had been three halfpence; from 1789 to 1797, twopence; from 1797 to 1815 twopence halfpenny; and from then till 1836 it had been kept up to fourpence. At fourpence it culmi-

nated, and now fell back to its original amount, carrying off with it all the old entangled system of legislation upon which it had rested.

The clauses of the new Act which were calculated for the extinction of the unstamped, provided that no person should, under a penalty of fifty pounds per diem, print or publish, or cause to be printed or published, any newspaper (the *London Gazette* only excepted), before there should be delivered to the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes, or at the head office for stamps, or the proper officer appointed by the Commissioners for the district, a declaration in writing, containing the correct title of the newspaper; the true description of the house in which it was to be printed, and of that in which it was to be published; the true name, condition, and place of abode of every intended printer and publisher thereof, and (with certain qualifications) those of the proprietors; and that every such declaration should be signed by the printers and publishers therein specified, and by such of the proprietors therein specified as might be resident within the United Kingdom, and should be renewed as often as changes in the concern might occur, and that any false statement in such declaration as to the printers, publishers, or proprietors should be deemed a misdemeanour.

The printer and publisher of every newspaper was, moreover, under a penalty of twenty pounds, to deliver at the ordinary price, at the head office for stamps, one copy of such newspaper as often as published, with the name and place of abode of the printer and publisher, written thereon in his proper hand, or by some person duly appointed to sign for him.

There was an additional regulation, that at the end of every newspaper and of every supplement sheet to the same, should be printed the Christian name, surname, addition, and place of abode of the printer and publisher, and a true description of the house or building wherein the

same was printed and published respectively, and the day of the week, month, and year on which the same was published; and any person knowingly printing and publishing, without these particulars, or with a false statement as to name, addition, place, or day, or a description of place different from that in the declaration before mentioned, should forfeit twenty pounds.*

It is, perhaps, worthy of remark, and rather conflicting with general impressions, that this partial liberation of the press was only too small a concession in the eyes of the Tories. Lord Lyndhurst, on the Bill appearing in the House of Lords, exclaimed, "Why not abolish the duty entirely?" But we have had occasion before to remark that it was not always those who professed a regard for the press who were its consistent and faithful friends. Burdett, Hunt, Roebuck, O'Connell, and Wakley—names almost identified with the liberty of the press—have each taken up the bludgeon of the "privilege," to deal a blow at the papers which opposed their views; and it is indeed remarkable how frequently the more democratic element of the House of Commons clashes with the press compared with the aristocratic Upper House. The House of Commons—especially the early reformed Parliaments—were always sputtering about their privileges: the House of Lords seldom complained of any breach of them, although that was the period when the press was constantly representing it as corrupt, effete, and worn out.

It has always been found difficult to define what is a newspaper. The new Act did not do so very clearly or satisfactorily. A newspaper is described in the schedule as "any paper printed in any part of the United Kingdom, weekly or oftener, or at intervals not exceeding twenty-six days, containing only or principally, advertise-

* Stephen's "Commentaries on the Laws of England," vol. iii. pp. 283-4; Tilsley's "Treatise on the Stamp Laws," pp. 490-511.

ments; and also any paper containing any public news, intelligence, or occurrences, or any remarks or observations thereon printed in any part of the United Kingdom, for sale, and published periodically, or in parts or numbers, or that shall be published for sale for a less sum than sixpence."

The Government had to contend with opposition to their measure from quarters whence, at first thought, it might seem they had nothing to fear; the existing daily stamped papers, and the weekly unstamped were alike opposed to them. Their own organ, the *Globe*, saw mischief in the measure. "Sure we are," writes the editor, "the first fruits of the measure would be anything but the diffusion of knowledge, whatever might be its ultimate consequences; at least the knowledge would not be of that pure and calm kind which is commonly deemed to merit the name." . . . "If Brummagem knowledge were suddenly encouraged by the total removal of fiscal restrictions, as well as by furnishing better organised means of transmission through the medium of his Majesty's post, we do not say it would be destructive, but we say it would be exceedingly troublesome, and very apt to find work for his Majesty's Attorney-General." . . . "It would require continual legal repression—that is to say, if incitements to turbulence are meant to be repressed at all."

On the other hand, the friends of the cheap press opposed it as not conceding enough—they were for the total and unconditional abolition of the duty. The proprietors and friends of the unstamped issued a manifesto, signed by one Lovett as secretary and by Dr. Birkbeck and Mr. Price as treasurers, in which it was declared that the measure would "only strengthen the monopoly of the press—make it, if possible, more servile and corrupt, and throw us more at the mercy of tyrants, by preventing us from reading or receiving any knowledge, but such as the

monopolists and Government choose. It then becomes your imperative duty to speak out for the total abolition of the tax, by rallying round the unstamped before your principal channels of information be effectually cut off."

The apprehensions which this manifesto betrays, and the result which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had foreseen and calculated on, were realised—in a few weeks not an unstamped paper existed. The effect which Mr. Goulburn and the *Globe* had predicted, did not follow—not a single ribald or seditious paper was started—the existing papers were not ruined—the character of the press was elevated by the force of competition, rather than depreciated; there was no tax imposed for the carriage of newspapers; the Post-office still found means of conveying them, and the mails were quite as safe to travel by; and lastly, the limited views of Mr. Barclay were enlarged upon, and the newspaper reduced to a price that admitted of its being read by thousands at home.

The immediate effect of this most important measure upon the revenue of the country, and upon the numbers and circulation and prosperity of the newspapers, is shown in the following returns:—

In the half-year ended April the 5th, 1837, being the first half-year of the new duty, the number of stamps issued throughout Great Britain was 21,362,148, and the amount of duty received, £88,502. In the corresponding half-year of 1836, under the old duty, the number of stamps had been 14,874,652, and the amount paid to the revenue, £196,909. So that the number of papers stamped had increased by 6,487,496, and the amount realised by the duty fallen off by £108,317. Taking the whole year, from April the 5th, 1836, to April the 5th, 1837, one-half of which was at the reduced duty, the number of stamps consumed was 53,496,207, showing an increase on 1835-6, of 18,000,000.

The following return shows the effect of the reduction

as felt in the different parts of the empire, and displayed at the end of the first year of its trial:—

From September 15th, 1835, to September 15th, 1836:

	Number of Papers.	Stamps issued.	Duty paid.
London	71	19,241,640	£256,556
English provincial	194	8,535,396	113,804
Scotch	54	2,654,438	35,392
Irish	78	5,144,582	37,525
Total	397	35,576,056	443,277

From September 18th, 1836, to September 15th, 1837:

	Number of Papers.	Stamps issued.	Duty paid.
London	85	29,172,797	£121,553
English provincial	237	14,996,113	62,483
Scotch	65	4,123,330	17,181
Irish	71	5,203,967	16,263
Total	458	53,496,207	217,480

The number of newspapers passed through all the Post-offices of the United Kingdom this year was forty-two millions.

The stimulus which the new regulations gave to newspaper enterprise is shown in the number of new papers started immediately. At the end of the year there had been one new daily, two twice a week, twenty-three weekly, one fortnightly, and one occasional newspaper started in London alone. Of these, eight were discontinued, and two incorporated. In the provinces, within the same period, there had been thirty-five new weekly papers, and one three times a week, of which six were dropped or incorporated with others.

The London daily offspring of the reduced duty, although it displayed vigour at its birth, was not destined to have a prolonged existence. The *Public Ledger*, an old and effete paper, which had scrambled on with a decreasing circulation out of the last century, was in the

market, and its advertising connexion being rather extensive, it was bought of Mr. Stevens, its proprietor, and a new ultra-liberal morning paper grafted upon the old stock, under the name of the *Constitutional*. The old paper, refitted with new principles, fresh painted in new colours, and re-baptised in a new name, came out on the day the new Stamp Act was passed, with a good staff of young and rising talent. Laman Blanchard was the editor; Douglas Jerrold, the dramatic critic; and Thackeray, Paris correspondent, and subsequently foreign editor. Thornton, the eldest son of Leigh Hunt, was sub-editor. This gentleman was born on the 10th of September, 1810, and had been educated for an artist, but Laman Blanchard introduced him to the *Constitutional* and a newspaper career, which has since placed him in the editorial chair of the *North Cheshire Reformer* and of the *Glasgow Argus*, and, on his return to London in 1840, to a connexion with some of the first-class papers. Mr. Hunt has also written a romance of the fourteenth century, called "The Foster Brother," which appeared in 1845.

But to return to the *Constitutional*: the attempt, maintained at the cost of six or seven thousand pounds, broke down, and the *Public Ledger* resumed its ancient name, and, donning the modest garb of a price current, tells the city world the daily fluctuations of the markets and the funds, and the amounts of imports and exports, and gives strange details of arrivals of cochineal and indigo, spices and sugar, tea and tobacco; or announces to its little circle what sales are coming on, whether of colonial or foreign produce, and whether "by auction," "by private contract," or "by candle," to the present day.

From the date of the reduction of the stamp, the newspaper became more than ever emphatically a popular institution. It addressed and influenced a far wider circle; its power was extended and strengthened, instead of being

weakened as had been apprehended by some; and the *Times* itself soon found that it did not increase the facilities it had so dreaded for setting up new and cheaply got-up daily papers; but "the leading journal" only experienced a little of that root-pruning which gives to newspapers as well as trees additional vigour and fruitfulness.

That journal had, on the 19th of April, 1836, to resist an action brought upon similar grounds to one which we have reported in a former page against the *Morning Chronicle*.* The case, Lay *v.* Lawson, reported by Adolphus, is an action against the *Times* newspaper, for publishing the advertisement of a sheriff's officer, offering a reward of five pounds for the capture of a judgment debtor, whom he had been unable to get hold of. The defendant pleaded that the advertisement was a *bonâ fide* one, without malice, and calculated to forward the ends of justice; but it was replied that it was merely for the capture of a prisoner under a civil process and for a private debt, and consequently could not be viewed in that light; the judge, however, ruled that the plea was admissible, and the jury returned a verdict for the defendant.†

Another important question had been raised and decided a year or two before—a question which involved the very existence in its completeness of that publicity to which we all attach so much value and importance as ensuring purity, impartiality, and justice in the administration of the laws. A person named Chalmers had been tried and convicted of forgery, but by political influence and for party purposes, as it was said, he received a free pardon. The *John Bull*, in the course of one of its reckless articles, had twitted Chalmers with his conviction, upon which he brought an action against the proprietors for libel. The

* See *ante*, p. 173.

† Adolphus and Ellis's "Reports of Cases in the Court of Queen's Bench," vol. iv. pp. 795-8.

John Bull pleaded justification, and attempted to show that all it had said was true, but failed to do so to the satisfaction of the jury, who gave the plaintiff a verdict and thirty pounds damages. So far the case was clear and straightforward, but Chalmers now becomes experimental in the law. The *Morning Post*, reporting the trial, gives as a part of the report the plea put in for the defendant; and on this Mr. Chalmers raises the question whether this was not a fresh publication of the libel. The case, Chalmers *v.* Payne and another, was accordingly tried in the Court of Common Pleas, on the 24th of April, 1835, when the jury, considering the plea of the defendants as part of the proceedings in the trial reported, gave a verdict in favour of the *Morning Post*.

Some other trials of interest occurred about the same time. The first was an action brought in the Court of Common Pleas, on the 10th of February, 1837, by Morrison, the proprietor of the celebrated vegetable pills, against Mr. Alderman Harmer, as proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch*. Great excitement prevailed in the public mind caused by some deaths which had recently occurred, it was said, through the injudicious use of Morrison's pills, and strange stories were told of the fabulous quantities to be taken as a dose of the medicine. The *Weekly Dispatch* took up the subject warmly, and published an article which, in addition to denouncing the medicine as poisonous, accused its proprietor of insolvency. On the count charging the libel on the pills, the jury found a verdict for the paper; but on the second count, setting forth the libel upon Morrison himself, they gave damages of £200.

Another case came before the same court on the 25th of October, in the same year, in which Sir John Easthope, the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, recovered forty shillings damage from Westmacott, the proprietor of the *Age*, for a slanderous article reflecting upon his character on the Stock Exchange.

Two criminal informations followed in the next year. On the first, the Reverend M. A. Gathercole, was, on the 24th of May, 1838, sentenced by the Court of Queen's Bench to three months' imprisonment in the Marshalsea, for publishing in the *Watchman* newspaper a libel on the monks and nuns of Stockton and Darlington; and on the second, John Joseph Lawson, the publisher of the *Times*, was sentenced in the same court, on the 19th of December, to pay a fine of £200 and be imprisoned for one month, for a libel on Sir John Conroy, accusing him of peculation in his office of treasurer of the household to the Duchess of Kent.*

Meanwhile the newspapers still had to bear attacks in the House of Commons, which they were prohibited from replying to. On the 27th of February, 1837, Mr. Serjeant Jackson complained of a breach of privilege in the shape of a personal attack made upon him by the *Morning Chronicle;* and on the 17th of April, the House was startled from its propriety by being told that the *True Sun* had published the report of a Committee on the Poor Laws, before it had even been presented to the House. This was an offence of such magnitude that the consideration of the steps to be taken in the matter had to be adjourned, and Sir Edward Codrington pleasantly wound up the evening with a complaint against the *Morning Post*, for misreporting a speech of his on the conduct of Sir Pulteney Malcolm. This led to warm personalities and bitter recriminations between him and Sir James Graham, which threatened to lead to a duel, but for the intervention of the House; and amid the din of the explosion and the smoke of the unloaded pistols, the *Morning Post* is lost sight of.

But the *True Sun* could not be let off so easily. Its proprietor, Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey, was a member of the

* Speeches of Lord Campbell, pp. 409-25.

House, and even of the Committee whose report it had surreptitiously obtained; and although the House was evidently half-afraid of getting into collision with one of its own members, which might bury it in a heap of musty precedents for the rest of the session, a brisk debate, opened by Lord John Russell, and in the course of which Mr. Harvey avowed his responsibility, occupied the sitting. On the 21st the debate is resumed, and, after a loud and jubilant crowing, Lord John Russell produces the egg he proposes to sit upon. It is laughed at by the Radical members, and Wakley, Hume, Duncombe, Roebuck, O'Connell, and Smith O'Brien, support an amendment of Harvey's to the effect that the proceedings of the Committee ought to be reported by itself to the House from day to day. But Lord John Russell's egg is hatched, and the little mouse which creeps out adopted by the House. A feeble resolution that such reports ought not to be published during the sitting of Committees is passed, and the House got out of its difficulty.*

It is amusing to see what a ridiculous figure the House of Commons has always cut at the conclusion of these privilege cases. If not contemptible as a downright bully, it comes out of them by the most miserable shifts of compromise, by the mean ruse of an adjournment to a day when the House will not sit, or by suddenly finding all the world laughing at it, and dropping the subject suddenly, and with no result. When will the House learn what a sorry figure it cuts when it gets itself into these dilemmas? Not yet! For, on the very next day, Sir James Graham complains of the very same paper, the *True Sun*, saying that he did not take off his hat with respectful alacrity on a message from the Queen being read to the House.

So, also, on the 12th of February, 1838, Mr. Wakley

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xxxviii. (New Series), pp. 1305-92, *et seq.*

again threatens the papers with the "bauble" of the Serjeant-at-Arms. The *Morning Chronicle* had not reported in sufficient detail the number or the nature of the petitions he had presented the day before, and, in his wrath, he rises and declares, that "whatever might be the consequence to himself, or whatever may be the consequence to that House, he would, if a similar course of injustice were pursued, on future occasions, fearlessly and perseveringly exercise the privilege to which he was entitled. He would call the attention of the chair to the fact of strangers being in the House, and, as the consequence, have every stranger rigorously excluded." *

On the 6th of April, the House again got into a mess that it found it very difficult to get out of again. A complaint was laid against the *Morning Chronicle* for an article reflecting on the decision of the Shaftesbury Election Committee. Now, the letter, which was the ground of complaint, was boldly signed by Mr. Poulter, the member whom the Committee had unseated. Yet the House pretended to believe that he could not have been the author, and preferred bringing up the printer to the bar. Mr. Poulter attended on the 9th of April, in company with the printer, and avowed the authorship of the letter. This plunged the House into one of its old difficulties, and it got out of it in one of its old ways: it adjourned the question for a week, and, when the week ended, the House was up and away for the Easter holidays.

And thus, without profit to the public or dignity to the House, was valuable time frittered away. A member himself, Mr. (now Sir Benjamin) Hall, said, in the course of one of these debates, "So frequent and long were these discussions, that since such subjects had been brought forward in the House, the business had been delayed week after week while they had been engaged in these matters."

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xl. (New Series), p. 1007.

Whilst in this temper, it was not very likely that the House would consent to enlarge those advantages which it had lately conceded to the press. Yet Mr. Roebuck felt its pulse, and moved, on the 13th of April, 1837, for a Select Committee, to take into consideration the abolition of the stamp upon newspapers. The reply was a gruff refusal. Wakley, Charles Buller, and Hawes, supported the proposal, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir Robert Peel opposed it, and the House rejected it by 81 votes to 42. The only piece of legislation which concerned newspapers, and which the House was disposed to pass, was rather adverse—for it remembered to take occasion of the introduction of the Imprisonment for Debt Bill to enact that the public journals should be compelled to insert the advertisements of insolvency, whatever might be the length, at the uniform charge of half-a-crown.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLOUDS GATHERING—CHARTIST AND SOCIALIST ORGANS—FEARGUS O'CONNOR AND ROBERT OWEN—THE "ECONOMIST" ESTABLISHED—THE "BRITANNIA" AND DR. CROLY—THE "ERA"—LEITCH RITCHIE—LORD BROUGHAM AND DANIEL O'CONNELL ON NEWSPAPERS—HOAX ON THE "MORNING CHRONICLE"—ACTIONS FOR LIBEL—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS PROTECTS ITS PRINTERS—ROEBUCK AND THE "TIMES"—DEATH OF THOMAS BARNES—AND SUCCESSION OF JOHN DELANE—BLACK RESIGNS THE EDITORSHIP OF THE "MORNING CHRONICLE" TO DOYLE—THE GREAT CASE OF BOGLE *v.* LAWSON—THE GLORY OF THE "TIMES"—HONOURS VOTED TO IT—THE "TIMES" SCHOLARSHIPS—FOUNDATION OF THE "ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS"—HERBERT INGRAM—NEWSPAPER GIFTS—AND FEUILLETONS—RIVAL PICTORIAL PAPERS—THE LAST TRIALS UNDER THE OLD LIBEL LAW—ITS STATE, UNCERTAINTY, DOUBTS; CONTRADICTIONS, AND ANOMALIES—LORD CAMPBELL'S ACT—ITS PROVISIONS—FIRST TRIALS UNDER THE NEW ACT—THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK AND LORD ALFRED PAGET ATTACKED BY THE "AGE"—HOW THE PAPER LIVED—ITS TRANSMIGRATION—J. H. STOCQUELER—FIRST ACTION UNDER THE NEW ACT—MARVELLOUS ENTERPRISE OF THE "TIMES"—THE OVERLAND MAIL FROM INDIA—WALTER AND WAGHORN TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER—THE TRIESTE ROUTE—THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT THWARTS THE "TIMES"—THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT AIDS IT—BUT THE EXPERIMENT IS ABANDONED—STATISTICS.

DISAFFECTION, sedition, and blasphemy had one of their periodical saturnalia about this time. Various causes combine to bring about, every now and then, a cloudy, threatening state of the political horizon; the season is deemed favourable for their own purposes, by a set of hungry demagogues, always waiting for times of scarcity, distress, and despair, and a social convulsion is threatened. Anon the season changes, the price of food goes down, and the labour market up; the clouds roll by, and when we look to see what damage the storm has done, we find only a few poor, half-starved, ignorant wretches who have been

surged into prison by it and are there abandoned by their leaders, to await their trials; but the foundations of the social fabric are as sound as ever. One of these dark clouds was passing over England about this time: the tempest was howling in the Potteries, in Manchester, in Birmingham—among the colliers of the north, and the miners of South Wales. Men were at work at night and in secret places, forging arms for a purpose they but dimly perceived; mysterious conspirators were gliding among them, arranging pass-words for an occasion which they had scarcely thought of; there was drilling going on at night on the Lancashire moors, it was whispered, but when they would be ready, no one knew. Be ready! For what? For rapine, murder, plunder, every excess! The political purpose was lost to view. Idleness, hunger, despair, not politics, were driving these men on to madness and destruction. It was the time of Frost, Williams, and Jones, and Socialism and Chartism were astir. Both were represented in the press. The *New Moral World* was established by Robert Owen, as the organ of the Socialists; and the *Northern Star*, by Feargus O'Connor, to disseminate the principles of the Chartists. These papers, which were never seen by ordinary newspaper readers, who only occasionally heard of them as being under prosecution for some excessive violence, had nevertheless, and for a period, a large circulation among the unfortunate classes, who were easily made to believe it was Queen; lords, and commons, who kept the bread from their mouths; but, as things mended, and the old ship righted again, content shone once more upon the faces of the working classes; they broke up their pikes, ashamed that they had ever forged them; they cut their dangerous acquaintances; and the messengers of mischief dwindled down to a circulation on which they soon starved.

But a paper of a different stamp was begotten of this gloomy state of things, a paper which dug and groped

among facts and figures to come at the root of the evil,—the *Economist*, a weekly journal, which has since become celebrated for its collections of statistics, and for its introducing its projector and editor, Mr. Wilson, to the post of Secretary to the Treasury, was established on the 20th of May, 1837. A very clever weekly paper, advocating Conservative principles, the *Britannia*, was also started about this period, or a little later, as we perceive, for the first number is dated in April, 1839. For some time its leading articles were written by Dr. Croly, the author of "Salathiel;" but, although it soon afterwards absorbed into its system what vitality was left in the *Conservative Journal*, it did not retain its influence for many years; but falling into other hands, declined, and is now only represented by the second title of the *John Bull*, with which it has become incorporated. Another Conservative newspaper had been started just before, the sporting and theatrical *Era*, which has since changed its political principles, and which first appeared on the 30th of September, 1838, under the editorship of Mr. Leitch Ritchie, a gentleman who is said to have written thirty volumes, and to have edited and partly written between forty and fifty more.* Mr. Ritchie was born at Greenock about the beginning of the present century, and served an apprenticeship at a banking-house in his native town; but, coming to London with letters of introduction to excellent commercial and mercantile houses, he was seduced by the painted charms of literature, and set to work writing earnestly. A goodly crop of works and of contributions to magazines bear witness of his industry; and he was picked out from the prominent position in which he stood, to edit the *Era*; and on the starting of the *Indian News*, by Messrs. Smith and Elder, the City publishers, in 1840, he was selected to fill the same post on that

* Men of the Time.

paper, which he did so much to the satisfaction of the proprietors, that, on their relinquishing their interest when it was, perhaps, most profitable, they handsomely made him a present of the copyright. This he afterwards disposed of, and now, we believe, is fully occupied in assisting the Messrs. Chambers, of Edinburgh, in their "Journal," and other publications.

Two complaints of breach of privilege elicit two very different opinions of the press from two very different men, Lord Brougham and Daniel O'Connell. The former, calling the attention of the House of Lords on the 3d of January, 1839, to a misrepresentation of his speech in the *Observer*, says, "It was a matter of wonder to him, as it must be to others, that the reports were so accurate." But, on Mr. Barron complaining in the other house on the 18th of April, that the *Times* had contradicted a statement he had made, O'Connell, smarting under the castigations of the "Thunderer," recriminates in that little way into which he often fell:—"This comes of improper reading," says he, with amusing narrowness. "If the honourable member had not read the *Times*, there would have been nothing of this."

The mention of Lord Brougham's name reminds us that in this very year of 1838, and on the 22d of October, a remarkable hoax was played off upon the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Post*, who were made to believe that letters had been received in town announcing his Lordship's death by accident. A long biography and obituary of the learned lord accordingly appeared in both those papers; but next day there came a letter from his Lordship, protesting that he was alive: and it was thought necessary for him to write another in a few days afterwards, to contradict a foolish report that had got abroad that he himself had been the author of the original falsehood, with a view to hearing what people would say of him when he was dead.

A batch of libel cases against the newspapers passed through the Courts of Law in the years 1839 and 1840. Early in the year the *Times* had to pay one hundred pounds damages in the case Cooper *v.* Lawson. On the 2d of November, 1839, a criminal information was laid in the Court of Queen's Bench against the *United Service Gazette*, for a libel on Admiral Ommaney; on the 13th, an action was tried in the Court of Common Pleas, brought by one Pisani, a dragoman at Constantinople, against the *Times*: on the 7th of December, two actions against the *Age* were tried, one brought by Mr. Somers, the M.P. for Sligo, who got fifty pounds damages, and the other by Mr. Chancellor, of Margate, who recovered one hundred pounds; on the 11th, Captain Ingram, commander of the "Larkins," East Indiaman, recovered nine hundred pounds damages from the *Times*, in the Court of Common Pleas, for asserting that his ship was not seaworthy;* and, on the 17th of March, 1840, Lady Bulwer got fifty pounds damages from the *Court Journal* for an alleged libel. The passion for bringing actions for libel seems to have been great; for the printers of the parliamentary proceedings did not even escape, and an Act had to be passed for their protection; and on the 20th of March, 1840, Sir Robert Harry Inglis moved that the privileges accorded by the Act should be extended to the protection of newspapers which copied the papers and reports printed by order of the House; but his proposition met with no favour and he was obliged to withdraw it.

The House was still out of humour with the press. On the 16th of June, 1840, Sir James Graham complained of the *Morning Chronicle* stating that he had prevented members from entering to make a house; and, on the 3d of May, 1841, Mr. Handley complained of an incorrect report of his speech in the same paper; but, on the 8th of September, Mr. Roebuck excelled them all in a breach of

* Chambers' Reports (Law Journal) vol. xvii. p. 1 (Com. Pleas).

privilege motion against the *Times*:—"There was," he says, "upon a newspaper establishment a person as necessary to it as its editor, who was called its responsible proprietor, and who was registered, and whose name was Lawson. He took it, however, that the chances were that, as the cards stood, that person was in prison. Aye, that he was in prison—for so libellous was the *Times* that the presumption was that he who represented it must be in prison." . . . . "If any one were attacked by the *Times*, and did not wish for a repetition of the attack, he would suggest to them at once *to horsewhip the proprietor, Mr. Walter*, and they might depend upon it that the attack would not be repeated." This language was held towards the press in the House of Commons not twenty years ago, and we do not find that the utterer of it was rebuked by the Speaker; but the House, not responding to his motion for the appearance of the printer at the bar, left him to follow the course he had recommended, which we have met with no record of his having done.

The interest of our history now, for a time centres in the *Times*: it is the prominent figure in the scene—the leading actor in the events of the two or three succeeding years, and those years added more to its fame and influence than any number of years that preceded them. Yet one of its lights was just burnt out: Thomas Barnes, the editor—that is to say, the principal editor—the contemporary Blue-coat boy of Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt, died at Soho-square on the 7th of May, 1841, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. From Christchurch, Barnes had gone to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. degree in 1808, and M.A. in 1811; and where he had for a contemporary and a rival the late Bishop of London; and on leaving college he entered himself at the Temple, and there made the acquaintance of the Honourable George Lamb, a brother of Lord Melbourne. But he did not long prosecute his studies for the bar, and, as we have

already seen, was easily won over to recruit the ranks of the *Times*.

The successor to Barnes was Mr. John T. Delane, who took his post as principal editor, and is, we believe, a nephew of Mr. Walter, the chief proprietor. He was brought up at Magdalen College, Oxford, and took his degree there: but the place which Barnes had left vacant remained unfilled in many particulars. He had marshalled around him a large and brilliant staff of literary talent; but he so disposed the forces at his command that each fell into his place, and worked with military precision, as a part of one great piece of mental machinery. But it began to be noted after his death, that different, almost opposite, opinions were expressed in the same columns upon certain subjects—the paper was a piece of mosaic, put together still by skilful hands, but the colours had been so toned down by the finishing stroke of Barnes' hand that it had never before occurred to the public that it was so. In private life he was respected. Captain Sterling, his coadjutor on the *Times*—the Jupiter who hurled its daily thunder—describes him as "the best good man, with the worst natured tongue;"* but Moore, who knew him well, and who has said of Sterling himself that he was "rather an artificial and affected man, but (as I understood from Corry) full of good feeling and kindness," introduces Barnes to the late Sir Philip Crampton, of Dublin, as "a good fellow, as well as a devilish clever one."† Two years after the death of Barnes, Black, who had gone to the helm of the *Morning Chronicle* about the time when he mounted the chair of the *Times*, resigned it into the hands of Mr. Doyle, the son-in-law of Sir John Easthope, who had recently purchased the paper from Mr. Clement.

When Barnes died, the *Times* was putting forth all its

* Lord John Russell's "Memoirs, &c., of Thomas Moore," vol. v. p. 171.
† Ibid.

resources, and scattering its ample means broad-cast over the Continent, in preparing to meet the most formidable action for libel that ever newspaper has had to encounter. The history of the great case, Bogle *v.* Lawson, tried at the Surrey Assizes on the 16th of August, 1841, is the history of a battle in which is arrayed on one side a band of bold, wealthy, almost influential, and quite reckless adventurers; and on the other, the pluck of a single newspaper, which has got scent of their wrong doings, and has followed them up thus far, till they have turned round, faced it, and are preparing for a crushing onslaught upon it. The *Times*, undismayed, stands at bay before them, and faces them with all the courage that honesty of purpose and consciousness of right inspire. All Europe is looking on: it is a proud spectacle for England and her press!

In May, the Paris correspondent of the *Times*, Mr. O'Reilly, gave it information, which was duly published in next day's impression, that a great forgery company had been established on the Continent, but that it had got blown upon and detected. As a caution, therefore, he sent the names of the conspirators, and their way of going to work. The object of this confederacy was, it appeared, to plunder the Continental bankers by means of forged letters of credit, purporting to have been issued by Messrs. Glyn, Halifax, Mills, and Company, the bankers, of London. They modestly fixed the limit of their spoil at a million sterling, and agreed, when that amount was reached, to dissolve the partnership, and retire, under various disguises, to America, India, Algiers, or Egypt. Among their number, were names which were familiar to the highest classes of society,—the Marquis de Bourbel, Baron d'Arjazou, a peer of France, Cunningham Graham, of Gartmore and his step-son, Alan George Bogle, the son of a West India merchant, and formerly a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, but now a banker of repute in Florence. To these

were attached six others of less consequence, and who played a subordinate part of the scheme. On a given day, these Mercuries, duly provided with their spurious letters of credit, were let loose all over the Continent,—in Belgium, on the Rhine, and through Italy,—and, at once, made for the towns at which Glyn & Co. had agents; so that, the letters being delivered simultaneously, a heavy sum would be bagged before the fraud could, by any chance, be discovered. The net was drawn in and showed a heavy draught. In two or three days, the following amounts had been got. In Florence, £200; Genoa, £1,500; Turin, £600; Milan, £800; Parma, £800; Rome, £1,500; Bologna, £347; Venice, £40; Trieste, £1,612 6*s*.; Cologne, £500; Coblentz, £500; Aix-la-Chapelle, £670; Mentz, £500; Liége, £100; Brussels, £750. All these facts were duly announced in the *Times*, and the conspirators denounced, by name, before the world. To preserve the fragments of the mask, behind which they perhaps hoped yet to carry on their scheme a little further, and, no doubt, trusting to the gigantic obstacles in the way of bringing their guilt home to them, Bogle, the banker, brought an action against the *Times* for libel; and tried all the means which the law knew or permitted, to hasten the trial. But the *Times* boldly hung on by its information, and only asked for time to substantiate it. Mr. Dobré, the solicitor for the *Times*, and Mr. Kerwan, were sent to almost all the principal towns of the Continent to collect evidence, at an expense which, although prodigious, was the last thing thought of it; and when the trial came on, the *Times* was in a position to put upon the record a plea of justification, and to prove the truth of its information. But, as, in those days, the charge, although true, was still a libel, (and perhaps the more so from the fact of its being true, for it had been argued that a charge which was true did a man's character more injury than a charge which was false), the jury were bound to find a verdict for the plain-

tiff, but marked their value of his character by giving him a farthing damages only, whilst the judge endorsed their opinion by refusing to certify for costs.*

The verdict was received with acclamations in all the commercial circles of England and the Continent, and with pride in those circles in which the men of the press moved; for, for a time, all jealousies and rivalries were forgotten, and it was admitted by papers of all sides, that the *Times* had brought honour upon the British press. The mercantile classes were not slow to acknowledge their obligations. Public meetings were held in all towns of great business resort in England and the Continent, and subscriptions set on foot to reimburse the proprietors of the *Times* the immense outlay to which they had been put. But, in a spirit worthy of the transaction, the proposal was gratefully and respectfully, but firmly, declined. And it was intimated that, if the public admiration could be directed into any channel conducive to a general good, the proprietors of the *Times* would feel flattered by the compliment. It was then resolved to raise a fund sufficient to establish two scholarships, one at Oxford, and the other at Cambridge, for Christ's Hospital and the City of London School respectively, to be called, "The *Times* Scholarships," and the presentations to which should be vested in the proprietors; and to set up on the Royal Exchange and in a conspicuous part of the *Times* Office marble tablets, of the value of one hundred and of fifty guineas respectively, with suitable inscriptions commemorative of the event. The Corporation of London, the different companies, incorporated bodies of all kinds, the Lord Mayor, merchants, bankers, tradesmen, and private individuals, all pressed eagerly forward to write their letters of gold upon the tablets, and, in a very short time, the sum of £2,700 was subscribed. The Lord Mayor

* Report of the action, Bogle *v.* Lawson, by W. Hughes Hughes.

gave ten guineas; thirty-eight public companies contributed £330 5*s.*; sixty-four magistrates, &c. of the city of London, £194 6*s.*; fifty-eight London bankers and joint-stock banks, £518 19*s.*; one hundred and twenty-nine merchants and traders of the city of London, £790 1*s.*; one hundred and sixteen country bankers, merchants, &c., £127 7*s.*; twenty-one foreign bankers, merchants, public companies, &c., £127 7*s.*; and one hundred and twenty-eight private or anonymous individuals, £301 13*s.*; making a total of £2,702 11*s.* The foreign subscriptions were from Alexandria, Antwerp, Cadiz, Calcutta, Cologne, Dantzic, Florence, Geneva, Hamburgh, La Guayra (South America), Macao, Malta, Messina, Naples, Newfoundland, Ostend, Paris, Venice, Vevay, and Wiesbaden.

In addition to the tablets on the Royal Exchange and at the *Times* Office, the memory of this great trial is also preserved in stone tablets put up at Christ's Hospital and the City of London School.*

These were certainly the greatest honours that a newspaper had ever attained; but they were nobly earned, and not grudgingly conceded.

The first newspaper which professed to lay before the eyes of its readers the events of the week depicted by the engraver's art made its appearance in 1842. A sturdy little Briton who had tramped his ten or twelve miles of country road a day, delivering newspapers to his master's customers, had grown up into an active, energetic, enterprising man; and Herbert Ingram, the newsvender of Northampton, was respected as an industrious, hard-working, honest tradesman, who would run five miles with a newspaper to oblige a customer. But suddenly a light dawned upon Ingram's mind, that the London press, with its thousands and thousands of broad sheets, was still incomplete;

* Mr. Knight Hunt, alluding to this trial, erroneously states that the verdict was positively (as it was virtually) in favour of the defendant. See "Fourth Estate," vol. ii. p. 183.

and left one want unsupplied, and one (and that a large) class of readers uncared for. There were papers for the Whigs, the Tories, the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Radicals, the Chartists, and for men of every shade of opinion between these parties; there were papers for Protestants and Catholics, Independents and Wesleyans, Jews, Socialists, Free-thinkers, and Infidels; there were commercial papers, literary papers, musical papers, theatrical papers, artistic papers, scientific papers, class papers, for almost all trades and interests; but among them there was no paper that helped the public to realise the news by giving as correct a representation as might be of the events recorded. Spreading out his foundations far and wide, he began to rear up the great structure of the *Illustrated London News*, and, his arrangements complete, he launched it into the world on the 14th of May, 1842. It hit off the public taste from the first. The idea was novel, and pleased the town. True, an occasional illustration of some particularly great and interesting event had been given as a supplement with some of the weekly papers, and a coarsely illustrated and very unreal portrait of the Queen, or a fancy sketch of a royal procession or state ball, or a likeness which did duty with several papers for the portrait of several successive murderers, would be now and then "presented gratis" to the readers of the *News*, or the *Weekly Chronicle*: but these were merely given to catch subscribers to a new paper, or preserve them to an old one; and the system had been discarded of late years in favour of another attempt at attraction by engaging popular writers to contribute sketches or tales. And *this* scheme, be it noted in passing, connects, in some measure, some well-known names with our history,—for Captain Marryatt wrote "The Poacher" in the columns of the *Era*; Mr. Ainsworth, the romance of "Old Saint Paul's," the Countess of Blessington "Strathern," G. P. R. James, "The Smuggler," and R. B. Peake, "The Adventures of Cartouche," in the

Sunday Times; and Mrs. S. C. Hall and Thackeray contributed sketches to the *Britannia,* and the Baroness de Calabrella tales to the *Court Journal.*

But the plan of the *Illustrated London News* was permanently laid down at starting; it was to be its business to illustrate the news of the week. Of course the scheme had many imitators, of which its success for a time increased the number, but they gradually fell off—the *Illustrated Weekly Times* and the *Pictorial Times* holding their ground the longest—and for ten or twelve years it had the field to itself. The circulation became enormous; in the first year a million copies were sold, in the second two, and in 1848, three millions. Mr. Ingram was rewarded for years of toil and industry, and has since obtained a seat in Parliament. Among the heroes of the pen whom Ingram numbered in his forces were Dr. Mackay, the lyrical poet, who for some years wrote the leading articles of the paper; Mark Lemon, the *Punch* writer and playwright, who, that prying little book "Men of the Times," tells us, was born on the 30th of November, 1809; Peter Cunningham, F.S.A., the author of the "Handbook of London," and the editor of the Standard Edition of the Walpole Correspondence, a worthy son of Allan Cunningham; Thomas Miller, the rustic poet, and author of "Royston Gower," whilom a basket-maker, and others.

Another argument involving the question of the privileges of newspapers was raised in the Court of Common Pleas, on the 23d of June, 1842, when Mr. Macready, the eminent tragedian, brought an action against Mr. Alderman Harmer, the proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch,* for a libel on him in his professional character both as actor and manager. The defendant pleaded that the strictures did not exceed the bounds of fair and justifiable criticism, but, as there *did* appear to be a little personal *animus,* the jury found a verdict for Mr. Macready, with five pounds damages. On the 7th of August, in the same year,

an action was tried at Guildford Assizes, brought by the Honourable Mr. Greville against Mr. Chapman, the proprietor of the *Sunday Times*, for attributing to him dishonourable motives in withdrawing his horse from the Derby. In this case, also, the verdict was against the paper, with damages of two hundred pounds. On the 25th of February, 1843, the *Satirist* suffered an adverse verdict in the Court of Exchequer, in the case of McGregor *v.* Gregory, for a libel, published on the 11th of the previous October, calling the plaintiff a black sheep, the associate of blacklegs, &c. These were the last trials under the old law of libel; if it could be called a law at all, for its state had been very unsatisfactory and uncertain. There had been, in fact, no enactment on the subject of libel until 1793. There were some absurd statutes of Edward the First and Richard the Second, against the spreading of false news; but these had no reference to newspapers, for no newspapers then existed. The charge of printed libels was taken by the Star Chamber, nearly from its establishment by Henry the Seventh, to its abolition in the reign of Charles the First. After the suppression of the odious tribunal, the judgments of the courts were principally founded upon the decisions of the Star Chamber, varied by the caprices or adapted to the temperaments of the various judges, until 1793, when Fox got his Libel Bill passed. This effected a small amount of good, for it gave to juries the right of finding a verdict upon the whole matter; but it was much abused by some of the judges, who pretended to read it compulsory on them to instruct the jury whether the matter complained of was libellous or not, whereas it only *allowed* them to express their opinion on the point. It also left other matters unsettled, and did not make any distinction between a libel which was true and a libel which was false and malicious. Up till 1702, it would have appeared from the decisions of the judges that a

statement, to be a libel, must be false; but it got afterwards to be laid down, that "the greater the truth, the greater the libel must be." To set the whole question at rest, to protect private character, and yet preserve a just liberty to the press, Lord Campbell introduced the Act which bears his name, but is technically known as the 6th and 7th Victoria, with amendments in the 8th and 9th of the same reign. The Act passed on the 18th of August, 1843. It laid down a new system of proceeding in cases of libel, both by indictment or action. In the former, it gave the defendant the power of pleading the truth of the charge, and that it was for the public benefit that it was published.* In actions against newspapers for libel it is, by this Act, made "competent to the defendant to plead, that such libel was inserted in such newspaper without actual malice, and without gross negligence; and that before the commencement of the action, or, at the earliest opportunity afterwards, he inserted in such newspaper a full apology for such libel; or, if the newspaper in which the said libel appeared, should be ordinarily published at intervals exceeding one week, has offered to publish the said apology in any newspaper or periodical publication, to be selected by the plaintiff in such action; and that every such defendant shall, upon filing such plea, be at liberty to pay into court a sum of money by way of amends for the injury sustained by the publication of such libel." . . . . "And that, to such plea in such action, it shall be competent to the plaintiff to reply generally, denying the whole of such plea."†

The punishment for maliciously publishing a libel *knowing it to be false*, is imprisonment with or without hard

* Warren's "Blackstone's Commentaries," pp. 472-5. Welsby's "Archbold's Pleading and Evidence in Criminal Cases," pp. 722-8.

† Chitty on Pleading (Seventh Edition), vol. iii. p. 256. Taylor's "Law of Evidence," pp. 306 and 662-3. Lush's "Saunders' Law of Pleading," vol. ii. p. 952. Stamp's "Index to the Statute Law," pp. 232, &c.

labour for any term not exceeding three years; and for maliciously publishing a libel, either fine or imprisonment, or both, but the imprisonment in no case to exceed the term of one year.*

Such is a sketch of the Libel Act of Lord Campbell, the first successful attempt at treating the subject temperately, justly, and sensibly. Its working and application will be found more fully illustrated in the reports, &c. which we have quoted at foot, than it would be in place to do here.

The first criminal trials under this Act were those of the publishers, &c. of the *Age* newspaper, a slanderous weekly print, which was own brother to the *Satirist* of Barnard Gregory. On the 2d of December, 1843, Thomas Holt, H. Brander, and G. Brander, the proprietors and publishers, were tried before Mr. Justice Wightman in the Court of Queen's Bench for a libel on the Duke of Brunswick, charging him with an atrocious crime. The defendants were found guilty and sentenced, Holt to twelve months', and the Branders to three months' imprisonment each. A more serious affair arose out of these trials. An application was made, and a rule obtained on behalf of the defendants for striking the name of the Duke's solicitor, Mr. Vallance, off the rolls, on the ground of his having forged Mr. Justice Patterson's initials to some alterations in the affidavits. This charge was attempted to be made out by the evidence of one Peter Townsend; but it broke down; the rule was discharged with costs, and, on the 23d of December, Townsend being found guilty of the perjury, was sentenced by the Court of Queen's Bench to seven years' transportation. The *Age* was soon in hot water again. Lord William Paget having brought an action against the Earl of Cardigan for crim. con., the *Age* asserted that his lordship had trumped up the charge against the Earl for the purpose of extorting money. For

* Archbold's "New Practice of the Courts of Common Law," p. 652. Gray's "Treatise on the Law of Costs," pp. 470-1, &c.

this vile accusation Thomas Holt was again tried on the 4th of March, 1844, at the Central Criminal Court, and found guilty; and the evidence of Lord William Paget showed what manner of paper the *Age* had now become, his lordship declaring that he had already paid Holt twenty-five out of thirty-five pounds, the sum agreed upon in consideration of his suppressing a slander which was about appearing in the paper against his lordship's family. The *Age* had been bad enough in Westmacott's time, but never so infamous as this. Westmacott was now lashing away, in his not over-discriminating style, in a new paper of his own setting up, the *Argus*, into which the *Age* gradually drifted, and the united papers went on as the *Age and Argus*, till they were both absorbed in a new paper of a very different stamp, the *English Gentleman*, which came out under the editorship of Mr. J. H. Stocqueler, for many years editor of the Calcutta *Englishman*, who has since written numerous works on Indian affairs and topics of the day, occasionally turning his hand to a *pièce de circonstance* for Astley's Amphitheatre, or a lecture for the Gallery of Illustration. But the paper was unsuccessful, probably on account of its high Tory principles, which were then not very popular, and no doubt partly from its avowing its descent from the *Age*, although it inherited none of its characteristics.

The first civil action tried under Lord Campbell's Act was that of Solomon *v.* Lawson; in which the *Times* having, on the 11th of October, 1843, stated, in its Indian Correspondence, that the *Moffatt*, East Indiaman, had arrived at Bombay with its passengers in a dying state from having drunk water supplied to the ship from a foul or copper tank at St. Helena, the plaintiff, who was the party supplying water to the ship, felt aggrieved by the statement, and got damages. But a rule in arrest of judgment was applied for and obtained in the Court of Queen's Bench, after long arguments on the 11th and 13th of February,

and 27th of April, 1846, and the verdict subsequently reversed.

But the *Times* had yet a greater triumph in store; and the mercantile community, which had already admired its courage in the case of Bogle *v.* Lawson, was now gratified by a specimen of enterprise far vaster than any newspaper in the world had yet contemplated, in which the *Times* sent forth its messengers over mountain and desert to fetch its news, and, entering into competition with home and foreign Governments, beat them by days in the conveyance of intelligence.

The overland route to India had now been opened up by Lieutenant Waghorn for several years, and the *Times* had been in the habit of anticipating the Government mail by sending its own courier to fetch its despatches from Marseilles. The French Government, jealous, it was believed, of the *Times*' priority of news, threw some difficulties in the way of this courier's passage through France, by raising questions as to the correctness of his passport and other means, till the Government mail from India had passed on for London in due course. Where it was only money and enterprise that were wanting to obtain a purpose, John Walter would be sure to effect it: he was not the man to be balked by a Government; he had threatened that the *Times* should send a member into the House of Commons to report its proceedings if his regular reporters were excluded—and he would have done it too; and now he took counsel with Waghorn, and determined to open a new route to India, for his own despatches. The experiment was tried in October, 1845; the *Times*' express was sent in the regular mail-steamer which arrived at Suez on the 19th of October. Here a man on a dromedary awaited it, and dashed across the desert with it, stopping nowhere till he reached Alexandria, where he appeared the very next day. Waghorn himself was ready on board an Austrian steamer, with the steam

up, and was off at eleven o'clock. His projected route lay through Trieste, but he landed at Dwino, twelve miles nearer London; and hurried through Austria, Prussia, Baden, and Bavaria, with passports already prepared and *viséd;* reached Mannheim in eighty-four hours, took special steamer to Cologne, and special train, all prepared and waiting for him, to Ostend; was on board a fast special steamer and off for Dover in a few minutes, and, taking the train there, arrived in London at half-past four o'clock on the morning of the 31st, thus performing the distance from Suez to London in ten days and a few hours. Meanwhile the regular mail, helped onward by all the resources of the two greatest nations of the world, who were alive to the rivalry and exerted their utmost efforts to defeat it, came toiling on, making its way painfully and laboriously for Marseilles. It did not reach Alexandria even—the end of its first stage, as it were—till half-past eight o'clock on the evening of the 21st, and did not leave till ten o'clock on the morning of the 22d, or forty-seven hours after Waghorn — unencumbered by the machinery of Government—had been off and away. And, before the mail had got to Paris on its way *to* London, the *Times* had made its appearance FROM London, with a full summary thus expressed of the news which that mail was bringing, and which did not get to London till eleven o'clock on Sunday night. This put the French Government on its mettle; and, placing fleet steamers and special trains at the service of the courier of the *Morning Herald,* it enabled that journal to publish its news, expressed through Marseilles, forty-eight hours before the *Times* could give its express brought through Trieste. This was a sad blow to the *Times,* after all the expense it had gone to, but there was nothing for it but to quote the news from the *Herald,* and make a dash for the next or December mail. Another Government was now looking on at the struggle with interest; Austria could not but see at once the great

advantage to be derived by turning the stream of the traffic from the East through its territory, and accordingly gave its support to the *Times'* scheme, and placed a special and powerful steamer at its service to express its despatches from Alexandria to Trieste. The result was favourable to the *Times* to a remarkable but accidental extent. Fearful storms swept the Mediterranean, and the mail-steamer, exposed to their influence, could not make Marseilles, whilst the Austrian steamer with the *Times'* express went, snugly sheltered, up the Adriatic, and thus the *Times* was enabled to publish its news an entire fortnight before the mail arrived! But this did not settle the question of the relative merits of the two routes; and, after a fair trial and a sharp struggle, the Trieste line was found expensive and not at all times practicable, and was abandoned; but we never heard of the *Times'* despatches being trifled with afterwards. We wonder what old John Walter, "the logographic printer," would have thought of his son's achievements, or of the world-wide renown of that paper which he had started and carried on with only the humble hope of realising by its sale a small addition to a small income!

The circulation of the newspapers, after ten years of decreased duty, was getting enormous. From January 1st, 1842, to January 1st, 1843, the number of penny stamps issued to newspapers was 63,591,156, of which England took 50,145,914 for papers, and 1,473,664 for supplements: Wales, 440,200 penny, and 10,830 halfpenny or supplement stamps: Scotland, 4,977,344 penny and 443,550 halfpenny stamps: and Ireland, 6,063,906 penny and 35,750 halfpenny stamps. From 1843 to 1844, the numbers were, England, 51,282,900 penny and 1,893,682 halfpenny stamps: Wales, 456,925 penny and only 2,000 halfpenny; Scotland, 5,293,726 penny and 243,150 halfpenny; and Ireland, 6,452,072 penny and 142,580 halfpenny stamps; the grand total for the United Kingdom

being 64,767,035. Next year it had got up to 71,222,498, and the increase was spread over the entire kingdom. England took, in the year ending January 1st, 1845, 53,933,848 penny and 3,738,128 halfpenny stamps: Wales, 479,700 penny and 7,000 halfpenny: Scotland, 5,727,585 penny and 317,620 halfpenny: and Ireland, 6,769,067 penny and 249,550 halfpenny stamps. Some hundred and fifty thousand newspapers annually went astray in the course of transmission through the post, either through the loss of the address label, or from illegible writing—at least, a Post-office return for 1845, shows that three or four thousand newspapers a week often lay at the Dead Letter Office, delayed from one or other of those causes.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RAILWAY MADNESS—ITS EFFECTS UPON THE NEWSPAPERS—THE RAILWAY PRESS—LIST OF RAILWAY JOURNALS—THE CRISIS AND THE CRASH—THE STEAM BLOWN OFF—THE MAD EXPLOITS OF THE "LONDON GAZETTE"—THE "GAZETTE," A DAILY PAPER—ITS UNWIELDY BULK—"TIMES" TAKINGS FOR ADVERTISEMENTS—FOUNDATION OF THE "DAILY NEWS"—CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE—THE "EXPRESS"—FREDERICK KNIGHT HUNT—WILLIAM HENRY WILLS—WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON—GEORGE HOGARTH—JOHN FORSTER—GILBERT ABBOTT À BECKET—FRANCIS MAHONEY—LITIGATION—THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK AND BARNARD GREGORY—ENTERPRISE OF THE "MORNING CHRONICLE"—ITS "COMMISSIONERS" OF INQUIRY INTO THE STATE OF THE POOR—HENRY MAYHEW—SHIRLEY BROOKS—EDWARD MAYHEW OF THE "MORNING POST"—HAYWARD AND THE "MORNING CHRONICLE"—G. H. LEWES—THE "LEADER"—ALBANY FONBLANQUE RESIGNS THE "EXAMINER"—J. L. MACKINTOSH—LOUIS KOSSUTH—THE "FONETIC NUZ"—ALEXANDER ELLIS, B.A.—JOHN O'CONNELL—LAST ATTEMPT TO EXCLUDE THE REPORTERS FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—ASTOUNDING IMPUDENCE—CLOSED DOORS.

THE railway mania was now arrived at its height of absurdity and madness. Impossible lines over impracticable country; lines to connect places without trade or inhabitants; colonial lines, foreign lines—anything that could be called a railway, were eagerly subscribed to by the public, which was just then in one of its periodical fits of excitement, when any impostor can do what he likes with it. Old ladies, spinsters, clergymen, and country gentlemen were particularly affected by it: and only too grateful to be relieved of their money. Railway directors were as plentiful as blackberries: you saw "stags" standing at every corner, awaiting the passing by of the postman to get hold of that letter of allotment which they could run off and sell at a high premium. This feverish excitement

had set everyone buying, consequently the prices of shares had been constantly going up, and no one had lost—*at present.* Never had a rage or mania been so *universal* since the South Sea bubble: even Mississippi Law would have held up his hands in amazement. The newspaper press—that great index of public opinion—soon showed, in its own characteristic way, the extent to which the fever had spread. Newspapers were set up exclusively treating of new or projected railway schemes: weekly at first; but the impatient public could not wait through such a long interval—twice—thrice a week—then daily. The railway press of 1845-6 is the most significant feature of that mad time. If some thirty sixpenny newspapers could get a living—and a very good one it was for a time—in London alone by publishing railway news, how many hundreds of thousands of persons must there have been interested in the schemes of new lines (real and sham), the prices of shares, reports of committees, and the other information which they gave out? We have preserved a list of co-existent newspapers devoted to railway matters in London, in 1845-6, which will be in itself a record of one of the greatest extravagances into which a nation ever fell.

DAILY MORNING.

Iron Times.

DAILY EVENING.

Railway Director. 2

THRICE A WEEK.

Steam Times. Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. 1

TWICE A WEEK.

Railway Mail. Tuesday and Friday. 1

Railway Shareholder.
Herapath's Railway Journal. Wednesday and Saturday.
Railway Critic. " 7
Railway Herald. "
Railway Record.
Railway Telegraph.

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WEEKLY. 10

Railway Reporter	Monday.
Railway Advertiser	Wednesday.
Railway Courier	"
Railway Chart	Thursday.
Railway King	"
Railway Argus	Friday.
Railway Express	"
Bradshaw's Railway Gazette	Saturday.
Railway Bell	"
Railway Chronicle	" 19
Railway Engine	"
Railway Examiner	"
Lloyd's London Railway Newspaper	"
Railway Monitor	"
Railway Standard	"
Railway Times	"
Railway World	"
Railway Supplement to the *Sunday Times*	"
Stock Exchange Express	"

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These were insufficient to appease the cravings of the public for information, and two bulky monthly magazines, expressly devoted to the same subjects, were eagerly bought at high prices. Strong symptoms of the disease were exhibited elsewhere; for, with all these journals posted by tens of thousands every evening for the provinces, Edinburgh maintained a weekly *Scottish Railway Gazette;* Glasgow, a *North British Railway Gazette;* and Dublin devoured two, the *Irish Railway Gazette*, and the *Irish Railway Telegraph*. Fainter were the symptoms displayed by the foreign press; yet there they were on the Continent, too plain and unmistakable, the *Journals des Chemins de Fer.*

But in 1846 came the crash: the palaces of the railway directors were tumbled to the ground, mere heaps of plaster and tinsel; their purses collapsed, and the counters, which they had so long been playing off as coins of the realm, lay manifest; their borrowed plumage was stripped off, and they were found to be mere kites and vultures after all. Happy homes were broken up; gentle maidens

had to turn out to service—or worse, as governesses; parents of ruined families rushed from the wreck their credulity had brought about, and plunged into the dark river. Rails and printing presses were sold for old iron, and the railway press sickened and died. Not without a struggle though. An insane attempt was made to continue the *Iron Times*, as a competitor of the *Times*; but the attempt failed miserably: the *Railway Bell* gave away terrestrial globes, well mounted, in the hope of keeping back its deserting readers; and the *Railway Telegraph* advertised pianofortes to be drawn for by such of its supporters as would subscribe for one year more. But the time was gone by: it would have been wisest to put up the shutters at once; people had no taste for railway news *now*. Many cursed the very name of railways, and turned with loathing from the papers that were feebly trying to blow the embers into a spark again. They dropped off one by one; for some time there were three seen struggling among the ruins, but the *Railway Times* and the *Railway Journal* were, at last, the sole survivors of that busy crowd.

Even the *London Gazette* was forced out of its jog-trot, and put upon the gallop in those wild days! for nearly an entire month it was forced into being a daily paper—and thus it was brought about. A Standing Order of the House of Commons made it compulsory on all projectors of new railways to lodge their plans and maps with the Board of Trade, and to advertise their scheme, set out at full length, in the *London Gazette*, previously to the 30th day of November, 1845, otherwise they could not be taken into committee during the session. The flurry and bustle among surveyors and draughtsmen, engineers and contractors, law writers and engrossers, was immense; and, as the month of November approached, plans began to pour into the office of the Board of Trade, and lengthy advertisements into the office of the *London Gazette*. It was, at first, announced that, in consequence of the

pressure of advertisements, an extra *Gazette* would be published on Saturday, the 1st of November; but they might as well have put a beer barrel to catch the falls of Niagara. The advertisements poured in: the *Gazette* was issued every day; yet the heaps went on accumulating; it was doubled in size, trebled, quadrupled—all was in vain; it had got, by the 15th, to nearly fifteen times its natural size, and yet there were bushels of advertisements awaiting insertion. The month wore on: projectors, on the verge of madness, demanded insertion; parliamentary agents offered fabulous amounts of money for a column or two of the quaint old paper, now swollen to the dimensions of the "Post-office Directory." Saturday, the 29th, arrived at last. Oh! that the Government could be prevailed on to put forth a *Gazette* on Sunday, for Monday would be the 1st of December, and—TOO LATE. Monday came, and the *London Gazette*, although it had to make room for a number of notices, and a quantity of matter put aside during the pressure, was 256 pages short of its Saturday number, 544 of what it had been once during that stormy month!

No better sign of the times can be recorded than that marvellous epoch in the career of the *London Gazette*; and as a register of the rise, the crisis, and the decline of that feverish month, we have compiled from its files the following table, showing the number of pages put forth daily by the *Gazette* during that busy November:—

Thursday, November	6th	. .	72	Thursday, November	20th	. .	191
Friday	„ 7th	. .	55	Friday	„ 21st	. .	231
Saturday	„ 8th	. .	71	Saturday	„ 22d	. .	287
Monday	„ 10th	. .	127	Monday	„ 24th	. .	127
Tuesday	„ 11th	. .	87	Tuesday	„ 25th	. .	143
Wednesday	„ 12th	. .	127	Wednesday	„ 26th	. .	127
Thursday	„ 13th	. .	104	Thursday	„ 27th	. .	153
Friday	„ 14th	. .	190	Friday	„ 28th	. .	207
Saturday	„ 15th	. .	583	Saturday	„ 29th	. .	295
Monday	„ 17th	. .	175				
Tuesday	„ 18th	. .	88				
Wednesday	„ 19th	. .	183	*Monday, December* 1st		. . .	39

It will be seen that the largest *London Gazette* ever published, appeared on the 15th November, 1845, when the number of pages it contained was five hundred and eighty-three. It was printed on one hundred and forty-five sheets, so that each copy required one hundred and forty-five separate stamps, costing in that respect alone twelve shillings and a penny, instead of the odd penny only; but the price remained the same throughout (two shillings and eightpence); indeed, it could have been distributed in the street gratis, at a handsome profit, for every morning the receipts for advertisements could be summed up by thousands of pounds.

The receipts of the *Times* for advertisements during this period were enormous. For the week ending September the 6th, they amounted to £2,839 14*s.*; 13th, £3,783 12*s.*; 20th, £3,953 7*s.* 6*d.*; 27th, £4,692 7*s.*; October the 4th, £6,318 14*s.*; 11th, £6,543 17*s.*; 18th, £6,687 4*s.*; 25th, £6,025 14*s.* 6*d.*; and with the week ending November the 1st they dropped to £3,230 3*s.* 6*d.* Meanwhile, the paper itself, with a spirit of independence soaring far above mere selfish or money-making considerations, was daily warning its readers against the schemes which it was obliged to give publicity to, and ultimately, no doubt, was a main instrument of putting down that spirit of gambling which was pouring into its coffers some three thousand pounds a week. It was a noble instance of the sacrifice of interest to duty, and should be borne in mind by men who are always ready to talk about the time-serving, mercenary, or venal character of the paper.

The two or three years succeeding the national madness and calamitous explosion of 1845-6, were, as is proverbially usual, calm and uneventful; the people were sadly and sorrowfully recovering their reason, but the papers were dull. It was, however, but a lull, not a calm; for the revolution of 1848 was to break out in two more years, to scatter crowns and crownless kings and queens

over the Continent of Europe, and to give to the daily press an amount of interest that it had not possessed for years; for well do we remember how eagerly we looked, each morning, to its columns to see what country was to-day rendered kingless, or what king throneless. The *Daily News* got a good start in these troublous times. Founded just as the railway mania was on the wane, with Mr. Charles Dickens for its editor, it had passed safely, though not without great danger, through all the incidents of a newspaper's infancy—it had been discovered that the brilliant sketching pen of Dickens was not yet blunted enough to be steeped in the gall of political writing—that the steel was too true and too highly tempered to carry the envenomed fluid, which ran off it like limpid water, and made the leading articles simply wishy-washy; so the editor had turned his attention to amusing his readers with the "Sketches from Italy," of which he gave them a column daily. But the new speculation drooped, and its best friends feared for its existence. It was then passed into the hands of Mr. Charles Wentworth Dilke, many years editor and proprietor of the *Athenæum*, which he had succeeded in rescuing from an untimely death, to which its founder, Mr. Silk Buckingham, had abandoned it. Mr. Dilke, who has since identified his name with the history of the Great Exhibition, was born on the 8th of December, 1799, and had been originally in the Navy Pay Office. His business habits, his literary experience, and his connexion with the world of letters, backed by his undoubted talents, led him to treat the dangerous, if not desperate case, with boldness and decision. He at once reduced the price to twopence-halfpenny, which was shortly afterwards raised to threepence, and thus procured an extensive audience; and he took care to surround himself with men who had something to tell, and a good way of telling it. He also founded, in connexion with his paper, the evening reprint called the *Express*, which from

its lower price, and its more vigorous writing, soon eclipsed the old Liberal evening papers. It was soon, however, discovered that the expenses—and no cost was spared to make the newspaper worthy of public support—were too great to admit of its being sold at its low price, and it was accordingly raised to that of its contemporaries. But it had attracted notice; it had obtained an audience; and they cheerfully paid the advanced price, and got its value. The *Daily News*, then, was safe through its early struggles, when the outbreak of the French Revolution presented daily to the newspapers strong food for digestion, and it was quite equal to the meal: it had doffed its swaddling clothes, and put on some of a rather deeper hue than the blue and buff. With a keen scent for the rising talent of the Universities, or the Inns of Court, the *Daily News* has sought it out, caught it, broken it in, trained it, and clapped it in its harness. A long list of hard-working, deep-thinking men might be made, who entered the world of letters, or of politics, through the portals of the *Daily News;* and not a few names, which had already gained distinction, joined Mr. Dilke's staff at once, or have since strengthened the forces of the young paper. First, we should mention Mr. Frederick Knight Hunt, who was for some time principal editor; because it was he who formed the nucleus for a collection of facts relating to the history of the newspaper press, in his "Fourth Estate," the publication of which he did not long survive. He was succeeded, on his death in 1854, by Mr. William Weir, a gentleman well known in Scottish political and press circles. Born at Edinburgh, about 1802, and educated partly at the High School of that city, and finally at the University of Göttingen, he was called to the Scottish bar in 1826: he for some time edited the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, but having taken a prominent part in the Reform discussion, he obtained the editorship of the *Glasgow Argus*, and, subsequently, on his removal to London,

became connected first with the *Spectator*, and then with the *Daily News*. Mr. Weir has lately been taken from us; he died on the 15th September, 1858. A sub-editor of the paper was Mr. William Henry Wills, a native of Plymouth, where he was born on the 13th of January, 1810. He was one of the originators of *Punch*, and is a brother-in-law of Messrs. William and Robert Chambers, the successful periodical publishers, of Edinburgh. Then there was Mr. William Hepworth Dixon, who has since written the lives of Howard the Philanthropist, Admiral Blake, and William Penn. He was, on the starting of the *Daily News*, a young man of five-and-twenty, a member of the Inner Temple, and had just succeeded to the editorship of the *Athenæum*, left vacant by Mr. Dilke's occupation upon his new adventure. Mr. Dixon wrote for the paper the series of papers on "The Literature of the Lower Orders." Dickens' father-in-law, Mr. George Hogarth, the author of the "History of Music," was one of the early enlistments into the ranks of the *Daily News*. Mr. John Forster, who was then assisting Albany Fonblanque in the editorship of the *Examiner* (to which he succeeded with so much credit to himself and to the paper), took charge of the *Daily News*, on the retirement of Dickens, and edited it till the accession of its new editor. The late Mr. Gilbert Abbott à Becket, who had previously served in the staff of the *Times* and the *Morning Herald*, was for a time attached to the *Daily News*. This gentleman, who died in his prime two years ago, was born in 1812, and was educated with a view to the bar; but his eyes were lifted from the study of the law-books, to see visions of fortune or scenes of excitement in speculation of a literary and theatrical character, which, as usual, proved delusive. In conjunction with Mr. Henry Mayhew, he took the Queen's Theatre, and, also in connexion with him, edited a weekly satirical publication called "Figaro in London." He contributed largely to *Punch*, and was the

author of the "Comic Blackstone," the "Comic History of Rome," and other humorous works. He was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn, in 1841, but, although his father was an attorney, he procured few briefs. He at one time obtained employment as Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, but was afterwards appointed as magistrate at Southwark Police-court, a post which he was filling with credit to himself and advantage to the public, when his untimely death took place. The Sister Isle sent its representative into the ranks of the *Daily News*. Francis Mahoney, born about the year 1805, derived his education from the Jesuits' College in France, and the University of Rome, from which he returned a priest of the Roman Catholic church. But literature had charms for him, and he left the priesthood, and became a contributor to the periodical press. He wrote for the magazines, under the name of "Father Prout." After leaving the *Daily News*, he was appointed one of the editors of the *Globe*, having stored his mind with the spoils of foreign travel in Hungary, Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, and the other Eastern countries.

With so much discrimination, enterprise, and liberality employed in the selection of its staff, it is no wonder that the *Daily News* soon jumped to a circulation only second to the *Times*, and, leagues ahead of its competitors, threatened for some time even to overtake the leading journal itself.

From 1846 till 1848, there is little to record of the history of the Press. Its career was ruffled only by a few actions, in almost all of which the Press got the worst of it. In 1846, Mr. Clement, proprietor of *Bell's Life in London* (then under the editorship of Mr. Dowling), had to pay thirty pounds damages, awarded in the Court of Exchequer, to Mr. O'Brien, whom his paper had accused of having been blackballed from the Royal Westminster Yacht Club. In 1847, Mr. Herapath, of the *Railway Journal*, suffered a verdict of five

pounds damages and costs, at the suit of Mr. Chadwick, in the Court of Common Pleas, although he had strictly conformed to the requirements of Lord Campbell's Act, and had published an apology according to the statute.* In 1848, Miss Hoare brought an action, in the Court of Queen's Bench, against Mr. Silverlocke, of the *Nautical Standard*, for asserting that she was not a deserving object of the relief she received from the Royal Naval Benevolent Society. The singular feature of this case was, that Miss Hoare pleaded her own cause, and not only gained a verdict, but again, on June the 27th, in her own person, and citing numerous cases and authorities which showed an intimate acquaintance with the law books, successfully resisted an application made by Serjeant Talfourd for an arrest of judgment. In the same year began a contest between the *Lancet* and the *Medical Times*, and the two adversaries went into the courts of law to fight it out. In the Court of Common Pleas, Mr. Healey, a barrister, and editor and proprietor of the *Medical Times*, got a verdict, on the 30th of November, with forty shillings damages, against Mr. Wakley, of the *Lancet*, for stating that his weekly vocation was to bring everything connected with the profession of medicine into disrepute and contempt. This opened the door of litigation; a writ of error was applied for and obtained on February 9th, 1849, but the judgment was affirmed; and the two combatants staggered out, grappling each other, into the Court of Exchequer. Much noise and pother, and the next year Mr. Wakley is uppermost, with a verdict of two hundred and fifty pounds against Cook, the printer of the rival paper, for a libel, charging him with party spirit in conducting the inquest upon White, the soldier, who died shortly after suffering corporal punishment. The year 1848 also witnessed the campaign of the Duke of Brunswick

* Chambers' "Reports" (*Law Journal*), vol. xxv. p. 104.

against Barnard Gregory, the editor of the *Satirist*, for libels too foul to be repeated; the wretched scribbler's attempt to play the part of King Richard the Third at the Strand Theatre, and his being hooted off by a house, it was asserted, packed by the Duke's friends; the trial of the case, the Duke of Brunswick *v.* Crowle, the publisher of the *Satirist*, in the Court of Exchequer, in which his Royal Highness got damages awarded him, but could never recover them from the broken bank of slander; and the final extinction of the *Satirist*, through the persevering and the relentless following-up of the Duke. Elated with the victory, he listened intently for any breath of calumny that might not yet be stifled: he heard a whisper of a slander, of five years old, coming from the *Weekly Dispatch*; and, in 1849, was down upon Mr. Alderman Harmer with an action for libel, in which he got five hundred pounds damages.

It was about this time—1847 or 1848—that the proprietors of the *Morning Chronicle* darted up a flame of vitality, as if to show that the old spirit which had burned in the days of Perry, had not yet lost all its strength. Groans of poverty, distress, and starvation had been heard through the length and breadth of the land; the Protectionists were not slow to call out, "Foreign competition has done all this—we told you so!" whilst the Ultra-Liberals shouted, "It is because we have not gone far enough!" and adventurers and speculators, chartists and democrats, denounced the whole system of Government as at fault. To ascertain the extent, the cause, and the cure of this distress, which, it was not to be denied, *did* exist, the *Morning Chronicle*, imitating a similar experiment on a smaller scale made by the *Times* on the state of Wales, sent out "Commissioners" to investigate the subject, and report the result in its columns. The inquiry was divided into three heads; the state of "Labour and the Poor," in London, in the provinces, and abroad. Of the main, or what soon became,

in his hands, the most interesting, branch, the state of labour and poverty in London, Mr. Henry Mayhew was set to the investigation, and in the course of it laid the foundation of that vast collection of statistical and minute information, which he has since, on two occasions—in "London Labour and the London Poor," and in "The Great World of London"—attempted to put together into one great Encyclopædia of Industry and Idleness, but in which attempt he has on both occasions most unaccountably and unfortunately been defeated by adverse circumstances. In the original survey in the *Morning Chronicle*, after throwing his strong light upon the dark places where industrious and honest poverty pined and died, and idleness and vice were rampant, he suddenly shut up his lantern in a misunderstanding with the proprietors of the paper, and, for some time, gave us his discoveries on his own account. Mr. Mayhew was born in London on the 25th of November, 1812, and educated at Westminster, where he had Gilbert à Becket for a schoolfellow, and formed an acquaintance which united them in speculations of no very fortunate issue in after times. Being considered, what many good and true men have been, rather wild in his youth, he was sent to sea, as the orthodox course in all such cases has been from time immemorial—as if there were anything in a sailor's roving life, or its associations, to make a young man steady; and perhaps a part of the old Bohemian tastes have clung to him, giving him that zest in inquiring into the habits and ways of the patterers, and waifs and strays of London, which always communicates itself to his reader, when he is telling those strange and captivating stories of the moneyless world. Mr. Mayhew has several brothers engaged in literature, and one, Edward, was for some time the fine-art critic of the *Morning Post*. Charles Mackay took the country section of the subject; and the foreign part of the inquiry, instituted to afford a comparison of the state of poverty at home

and abroad, was entrusted to Mr. Shirley Brooks, a gentleman born in 1816, and brought up to the bar, but who had abandoned his profession, and written some successful dramas and a novel or two, and was favourably known as a contributor to the periodicals. He was sent to ascertain the groundwork and causes of poverty in Southern Russia, Turkey, and Egypt, and his researches, reprinted from the *Morning Chronicle*, have appeared under the title of "The Russians of the South."

We must not forget to cede to the *Morning Chronicle* the merit of having had, as one of its literary critics, Mr. Hayward, Q.C., by whom the biographies of Lord Melbourne, General Von Radowitz, and Pierre Dupont were written for its columns, from which they have been since transferred into his "Biographical and Critical Essays."

Another of the pens of the *Morning Chronicle* was in the hands of a voluminous contributor to the Reviews, Mr. G. H. Lewes. This gentleman was born in London on the 18th of April, 1808, and educated partly by Dr. Burney of Greenwich, and partly abroad. He was at first put as clerk to a Russian merchant, and afterwards tried his hand at medicine, but his feelings were too sensitive to admit of his witnessing or taking part in any surgical operation, and throwing down the lancet and the scalpel, he took up the more cruel weapon of the critic. He could not draw blood with this—he might draw tears, but those he would never see. He has written many successful works, besides an immense number of contributions to the Edinburgh, Westminster, and other Reviews, Blackwood's, Fraser's, and other Magazines, and the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Atlas* newspapers.

In 1849 a new London weekly paper was projected—the *Leader*, of which Mr. Lewes was at once appointed editor, a post which he continued to occupy until July, 1854. His correspondence with Charlotte Brontë—or so

much of it as Mrs. Gaskell gives in her life of the authoress of "Jane Eyre," reflects credit upon both the authoress and her critic.

The year which saw Mr. Lewes mount the editorial chair of the *Leader* witnessed the abdication of that of the *Examiner* by Mr. Albany Fonblanque, who had occupied it for five-and-twenty years. In this year he was appointed chief of the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, from which he has since been raised to a Commissionership of Bankruptcy. He was succeeded by John Forster, who will be better known to posterity as the author of the "Life of Goldsmith," "The Statesmen of the Commonwealth," and other works. A selection from Mr. Fonblanque's articles in the *Examiner* has been published, under the title of "England under Seven Administrations." About the same time Mr. J. L. Mackintosh took the reins of the *Morning Post*, and Louis Kossuth, the ex-dictator of Hungary, strayed into the press world as a writer in the *Sunday Times* and the *Atlas*.

A singular newspaper had been started by the "Phonetic reformers," a new school of theorists, who proposed to simplify our language, and render it more easy to print and to be understood by foreigners. Their plan was to spell every word according to its pronunciation, and to render this more practicable they invented several new characters, diphthongs, after the manner of the Greek. To advocate this reform and to illustrate their scheme, they for some time brought out a general weekly sixpenny newspaper, printed after the new style, and rejoicing in the name of the *Fonetic Nūz*, the editor and proprietor of which was Alexander J. Ellis, B.A. Of course, it had not a very prolonged existence.

The last attempt made in Parliament to exclude the representatives of the public press may be pinned to the mantle (decidedly not that of his father Daniel) of the late Mr. John O'Connell, and was made as near the present time

as May 18th, 1849. Although only nine years ago, our readers may have forgotten the particulars, and besides, it is due to the memory of the O'Connells to put the facts upon record here. On the 1st of May, then, calling attention to the Standing Orders of the House, Mr. O'Connell proceeded, in language which provokes a smile when we consider from whom it came, and to what it related—"He found, in a newspaper called the *Times* (!), which *some* honourable members might have seen that day (!), a violation of the rules," for which he moves that the printer be ordered to attend the House on the morrow.* The motion dropped for want of a seconder; so, on the 18th, Mr. O'Connell called the attention of the Speaker, for which no seconder is required, to the presence of the reporters, as "strangers," in the gallery, and they were of course, according to the Standing Order, commanded to withdraw.† On the 24th, Colonel Thompson moved the consideration of this Standing Order, which gave the power of excluding the Press to the caprice of a single member, with a view to its alteration, and being put upon the footing of other motions which require both a proposer and a seconder. Sir George Grey would have it referred to a committee, and eventually the subject dropped; but in the House of Lords, the mischief of giving so arbitrary a power to one member was exposed by Lord Beaumont, who made a similar motion to Colonel Thompson's; but the feeling of the House being manifestly against him, he modified it into an inquiry into the general accommodations of the House.

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. civ. (Third Series), p. 1058.
† Ibid, vol. cv, p. 670.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW FARES THE COUNTRY PRESS?—THE COUNTRY JOURNALIST'S MISSION—STARS IN THE PROVINCES, AND SOME SMALLER LIGHTS—WILLIAM HENRY IRELAND—JOHN MACKAY WILSON—HENRY DAVID INGLIS—HARD-WORKING JOURNALISTS—THE TROUBLES OF COUNTRY NEWSPAPERS—THE WHIGS AND THE PRESS—THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" EXPOSES A SWINDLE—THE PRESS AT THE ASSIZES—THE SCOTTISH PRESS—WILLIAM MOTHERWELL—JAMES BALLANTYNE—THOMAS AIRD—DR. JAMES BROWN—HUGH MILLER—STATISTICS—THE IRISH PRESS—STILL PUGNACIOUS—GOVERNMENT EXERCISES THE POWER OF REFUSING STAMPS—THE CASE OF MR. NANGLE—THE GOVERNMENT AND THE "DUBLIN GAZETTE"—THE IRISH STATE TRIALS—GRAY OF THE "FREEMAN'S JOURNAL;" BARRETT OF THE "PILOT;" AND DUFFY OF THE "NATION"—DISSENSION IN THE REPEAL CAMP—THE DIVISION SUBDIVIDED—THE "UNITED IRISHMAN" AND THE "IRISH TRIBUNE" GO OFF—JOHN MITCHELL, WILLIAMS, AND O'DOGHERTY—THOMAS DAVIS—"THE SONGS OF THE 'NATION'"—THEIR AUTHORS—THOMAS CARLETON—SEDITION RAMPANT—THE SPECIAL COMMISSION—TRANSPORTATION OF MITCHELL—THE "IRISH FELON"—JOHN MARTIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES—THE REBEL PRESS—SUPPRESSED BY THE STRONG HAND—A WORD FOR THE "FILON PRESS,"—THE DUBLIN PRESS SUBSIDIZED BY GOVERNMENT—A GREAT SCANDAL—STATISTICS.

We are now hastening on to that event which, whilst it may appropriately wind up our history, has set free the iron limbs of the press, and left them to take gigantic strides after their own manner along the way of progress; and it behoves us here to pause and look back, not along the road we have travelled, but upon the prospects we have passed on the right and left of it—to take a survey over the country and its newspapers, and see how they have got on since we last examined them. For, in the history of the country press, there lies a fund of improving contemplation. If there be fewer exciting events or stirring

scenes, we find, over and over repeated, the story of the industrious apprentice marrying his master's daughter and succeeding to his business. We meet, if not with the gigantic enterprise of the London press, with honest, plodding industry: if not with the brilliant talent, with sound, hard common sense—a little obstinate and dogged now and then, perhaps, but such as sees things in the right light from the very first, and will have others see them so too. And not rarely we find early genius twinkling in the columns of the provincial newspaper—a glow-worm in the corner—that is destined to shine, a brilliant luminary over the world of London. Lastly, if the worthy proprietors do not so often enter the senate of their country, we see them dying in the golden chains or ermine robes and ripened honours of mayors or councillors of their native towns—a not unprofitable or useless life! Exposing local jobs, proclaiming local grievances, protecting local interests—these are the obvious duties of the local journalist, and the man who performs them fearlessly, honestly, and justly, deserves well of his fellow-townsmen. Some few have soared higher, and been visible beyond the limits which encircle their town. The *Leeds Mercury* arose and brought Mr. Baines into view; Hugh Miller, James Montgomery, Robert Nichol, mounted and took with them into the light the Edinburgh *Witness*, the *Sheffield Iris*, and the *Leeds Times*.

The provincial press, too, is the canal of information which irrigates the country, and makes knowledge fruitful in the land: it is the great system of arteries which, circulating through the body politic, carries nourishment to, and receives strength from, the heart which is in London: it is as a hundred tributaries bringing their streams of intelligence into the source from whence springs the London press.

Let us, then, see something of its humble heroes—its unknown martyrs. We shall find, as we have said, their

stories to be of that kind which sets an example and holds out a promise of reward—men who worked hard and thought right.

Such a man was Charles Wheeler, the founder, proprietor, and printer of the *Manchester Chronicle*, which he established on June the 23d, 1781, and lived to see prosper in his hands for six-and-forty years. On his death, which occurred on the 9th of September, 1827, at the age of seventy-six, this honest man, after bringing up and providing for a numerous family, was enabled to spare out of his earnings, to the poor of his town, twenty pounds to twenty poor families, four pounds to each journeyman in his employ, and one pound to each apprentice. His eldest son, John, carried on the *Chronicle* after his decease, and was the father of another journalist, John Wheeler, editor and proprietor of the *Hampshire Independent*.

John Fletcher, for more than half a century proprietor and publisher of the *Chester Chronicle*, came out of the same mould. He was born at Holton, in Cheshire, of humble but respectable parents, but by temperance, prudence, assiduity, unsullied probity, and uncompromising integrity rose to be twice chief magistrate of the city. On his death, on the 7th of January, 1835, in his eightieth year, he left behind him the character of a liberal master, a sincere friend, a kind-hearted and benevolent man in all the relations of life, and a public benefactor.

William Preston, editor of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and, at the time of his death, head of the firm of Preston and Heaton, was a native of Lancashire, who originally came to seek employment at Newcastle, in 1784, and for many years filled the post of overseer in the office of the *Chronicle*, and by sheer merit rose to the post which he filled for years with considerable ability. He died July 12th, 1835, aged eighty years.

The *Norfolk Chronicle* has a similar bright page in its history. William Eusebius Andrews, an "industrious

apprentice" in its office, who was born at Norwich on the 15th of December, 1775, displayed so much ability and assiduity during the term of his apprenticeship, that, on its expiration, he was set to edit the paper, which he continued to do for fourteen years. But, being encouraged to come to London, he set up on a wider scale as bookseller, in Duke-street, Little Britain, where he died, April the 7th, 1837. During his residence in London, he edited the (Catholic) *Orthodox Journal.*

But the most successful of provincial journalists, and the one to whose history they may call the attention and direct the imitation of their children with a just pride, was Edward Baines, many years editor and proprietor of the *Leeds Mercury.* Born in 1774, at Walton-le-Dale, in Lancashire, he was first apprenticed to Thomas Walker, printer and stationer, at Preston, but, removing to Leeds, his articles and he were transferred to Binus and Brown, of that town. His apprenticeship over, he set up in business, in partnership with a Mr. John Fenwick, under the firm of Baines and Fenwick; but on the death of his old employer, Mr. Binus, in 1800, he took the *Leeds Mercury* of the family, and became its sole conductor. Under his hands it flourished greatly, and still more, after he had been joined, in 1828, by his eldest son (by Charlotte, daughter of Matthew Talbot, the author of the ponderous "Analysis of the Bible," whom he had married in 1799, and by whom he had six sons and five daughters). John Talbot, his brother-in-law, he employed in the office of the *Mercury* for five-and-thirty years and until his death, on the 27th of March, 1839, in his sixty-sixth year. On the 17th of February, 1834, the electors of Leeds returned Mr. Baines to Parliament, without a canvas and without expense on his part. The "History of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster," in four volumes, quarto, is an example of Mr. Baines' industry and painstaking.

But we must not exhibit the bright side of the picture

only; there were shade and obscurity in the country as well as in town; there were newspaper editors and newspaper proprietors who did *not* amass wealth or win honours; some of the honest but never-fortunate class; many of the "honest-enough but thoughtless;" not a few, it is to be feared, of the downright dishonest.

Poor George Wood, a benevolent, energetic, but imprudent man, to whom Canterbury, his native city, is mainly indebted for the foundation of its museum, failed to make a fortune out of newspapers. His first enterprise was the *Man of Kent*, which had not a very long career, and, at its fall, he purchased the *Kent Herald*, and greatly increased its circulation. But, although prosperity seemed to be filling his sails, it was a deceitful breeze, and he was fast going to wreck upon a hostile shore. The gout harassed him with its repeated attacks; his affairs, neglected, were becoming embarrassed, when death stepped in, and carried him away, in August, 1829, at the early age of thirty-nine.

William Henry Ireland, the perpetrator of the Shakspeare forgeries, was also a provincial editor of this period. He was a son of Samuel Ireland, of London, the architectural writer and getter-up of the "Picturesque Tourist" Series. On completing his education at Soho School, he was apprenticed to a conveyancer at New Inn, where, having plenty of leisure time on his hands, he amused himself in copying ancient writings, and became so successful an adept, that he was tempted to foist upon a deluded world those impudent and atrocious forgeries, which he pretended were the genuine works of Shakspeare; but which, in 1796, he was forced to confess, were the productions of his own brain only. He was, for some years, editor of the *York Herald*, and died on the 17th of April, 1835.

In the ranks of the country press there were some names which were known also in another sphere. There

was John Mackay Wilson, author of the "Tales of the Border," who died on the 2d of October, 1835, after editing, for many years, the *Berwick Advertiser*. Henry David Inglis, too, the writer on Ireland, was for a long time editor of the *Derbyshire Courier*. He was a native of Scotland, and had first edited a Guernsey newspaper, and afterwards the *Leeds Independent*. His first writings were under the pseudonym of "Derwent Conway," and he was the author of works upon Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the Channel Islands, and Ireland, as well as a novel called "The Modern Gil Blas." He died in London, aged forty. Thomas Noble, a song writer and translator of "Zalomer," a romance from the French, who died on the 7th of November, 1837, was many years editor of the *Derby Reporter*, and had filled the same post in the offices of other provincial papers.

But in the majority of cases, the publishers and proprietors were their own editors, having been intelligent printers, who had employed their leisure time—snatched from hard work—in reading and thinking.

A good type of this class was stout old Benjamin Flower, the founder in 1793, and many years editor and proprietor, of the *Cambridge Intelligencer*. Like all men of his kind, he took bold views, and, depend upon it, he stuck to them. He was among the first to denounce the war with France as "wicked and absurd." For an article on the Bishop of Llandaff, he was, in 1797, imprisoned by order of the House of Lords, but was liberated before the end of the session. And at this part of his career occurred a little bit of romance to a man of essentially unromantic life. Whilst in prison, he received a visit from an amiable sympathiser—a beautiful and accomplished lady who, admiring his struggles in the cause of liberty, brought him words of comfort and consolation, and offers of assistance. Stout Benjamin Flower was moved, and Cupid stole into his unguarded bosom. Soon after his

release, his fascinating visitor became his wife, and assisted him in his literary labours so ably, and tended him in his hours of need so faithfully, that poor Flower felt her death cruelly, as his exclamation indicates—"When such friends part 'tis the *survivor* dies." He soon after retired from public life, considering that "Providence had entrusted the defence of liberty and truth to younger heads;" and died at Dalston, on the 17th of February, 1829, aged seventy-four.

William Todd, proprietor of the *Sheffield Mercury*, bequeathed two of his sons to the ranks of the provincial press of this period: Henry, who started the *Sheffield Courant* on the 9th of July, 1827, and Joshua, who owned and conducted successfully the *Leeds Independent*.

They were not without their troubles and their persecutions, these country editors. Magistrates on the bench who were parsons, and grand jurymen on the list who were fox-hunting squires, professing a contempt for newspapers and their scribblers, would harass them sadly, sometimes. The two hardest cases we remember, were those in which the county magistrates took advantage of the disturbed state of the country, about the year 1833, to follow up, almost to ruin and utter destruction, persons who were offensive to their worshipful eyes. In November, 1833, John Lewis Brigstock, printer of the *Welshman*, Carmarthen paper, was sentenced, by Mr. Justice Patterson at Brecon Assizes, to be imprisoned five months in the county gaol, and to find bail, himself in a hundred pounds and two sureties in fifty pounds each,* for a libel on two magistrates, although Mr. Palmer, the known and avowed author of the article, was not brought to trial.

On the 16th of the same month, Levy Emanuel Cohen,

* Carrington and Payne's "Reports of Cases at Nisi Prius," vol. ii. pp. 184-5.

proprietor and editor of the *Brighton Guardian*, for attributing the frequent occurrence of incendiary fires to the severity of the local magistracy, was convicted of libel, "tending to bring the magistrates of Sussex into contempt, to set the lower classes against the higher, and to incite the people to acts of incendiarism." The last part of the charge, Justice Parke, who was the presiding judge, told the jury, was quite unsupported; but he was found guilty, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment, to pay a fine of fifty pounds, and to find sureties for three years. But the greatest cruelty about the sentence was the manner in which it was carried out. Chelmsford gaol was the prison selected for the incarceration of this Brighton offender, two days' post removed from his family, friends, and business! What was to be argued from this, but a determined attempt to ruin the *Brighton Guardian?* Of course it did not escape comment. On the 21st of February, 1834, the matter was brought before the notice of the House of Commons, on which Lord William Lennox nobly avenged himself of Cohen's "weekly libelling himself and family," by warmly advocating, upon the broad principles of justice, his enlargement. The members of the Government purposely absenting themselves to avoid unpleasant questions or extorted explanations, Feargus O'Connor bitterly exclaimed, "This is the liberty of the press of the Whigs! There have been more prosecutions under this Government, to attempt to put down the liberty of the Press, than under any other administration; so that, if Ministers continue going on in this way, the House of Commons will soon have petitions from all the editors in the country, for a convenient prison for them to be confined in."* These hard words were scarcely undeserved, for we very much doubt, looking to their acts—the only facts on which we are to form an opinion, and unbiassed

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xxi. (Third Series), p. 639.

by their mere words—whether the later Whigs have any sincere regard for the liberty of the Press, nay, whether in fact they do not find it a stumbling-block in their way; with its peering and prying into quiet arrangements and probing for motives; letting in the light at inconvenient seasons upon nice little family groups dividing nice little public pickings—the bold uncompromising enemy of nepotism, patronage, and jobbing. On the 4th of March, Mr. Wigney, the member for Brighton, again called the attention of the House to Cohen's case, and moved for his release. The motion was strenuously resisted by Ministers and their adherents, all of whom studiously and entirely blinked the question of what was very justly called his "transportation" to a distant gaol, and it was negatived by 58 votes to 27. So Mr. Cohen was left to serve out his time of imprisonment or banishment, and to return home at the end of it elevated into a martyr, and dignified with honours which all his writings in the *Brighton Guardian* could never have procured for him.

We must not part from the English provincial press without recording how, in 1834, it scented a swindle and rooted it out; how it defied law, when the law was invoked to protect the wrong-doer, and, placing itself under the protection of justice, fought the giant Fraud, and won the victory; for the country press has a "Bogle *versus* Lawson" story of its own. A mysterious stranger, accompanied by two buyers of known repute and respectability, had been visiting most of the large manufactories and warehouses of Manchester, and also, it was said, of Leeds, and making extensive purchases of goods. The *Manchester Guardian*, "acting on information it had received," as the police would say, took stock of this gentleman, and on the 27th of December, in an article which startled Manchester and made some of its largest merchants feel uneasy, denounced him as connected with a gang of swindlers in London. His two buyers, the paper went on to say, were,

as they had always been considered, highly respectable men, but they had been only recently engaged on answering an advertisement, and were ignorant of the practices of their principal. This bold assertion soon brought the *billets* of the law to the door of the *Guardian*. An action was threatened—the proprietors of the paper were ready to justify; the action was brought, and the proprietors, at a large expense, brought witnesses into court who proved the truth of almost every one of its statements, and the jury returned a verdict for defendants. On the 6th of April, 1836, a new trial of the case Clarke *v.* Taylor and another was moved for, on the miserable ground that the whole of the libel had not been justified, inasmuch as it was not proved that the plaintiff had been making purchases at Leeds as well as at Manchester; but the judge considered that a sufficient portion of the statement had been confirmed to prove its general truth, and dismissed the application.*

The *Bristol Mercury* had to stand a trial on the 9th of May, 1839, for a correct report of a speech of Mr. Berkeley's, in which there occurred what was alleged to be a libel upon a Mr. Harmer, an attorney of Bristol; but the jury returned a verdict for the paper. On the 19th of July in the same year, Mr. Feargus O'Connor was found guilty at York, on a criminal information, of a libel on the Poor-Law Guardians of Westminster, published in the *Northern Star*, then a provincial paper. And on the 5th of November in the same year, an action was brought by Sir Charles Shaw, the new police commissioner for Manchester, against the *Manchester Chronicle*, for a libel. The particulars are uninteresting; but in the course of the trial before the Court of Queen's Bench, it came out that the belligerent editor, a Mr. Dyer, disdaining the weapons of the law, had gallantly offered to give the plaintiff "every satisfaction which one gentleman has a right to expect from another."

* Bingham's "New Cases."

We may close the history of the provincial press, by registering the death of a respected worker on it,—Thomas Knott, a proprietor, and for twenty-five years editor of *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, who died on the 9th of July, 1839, aged forty-nine.

The history of the Scottish press for the quarter of a century from 1825 to 1850, is studded with some names, bright with the light of genius, charity, or honesty. There was James Donaldson (a descendant, no doubt, of that James Donaldson who so sorely troubled Adam Boig of old),* proprietor of the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, who, on his death, in 1830, left two hundred and forty thousand pounds for endowing a hospital for boys, to be called "Donaldson's Hospital."

Then there was William Motherwell, a poet of some repute, who edited the *Glasgow Courier*. Motherwell was born at Glasgow, and educated at Paisley. His first appearance in the world of letters was in 1818, when he edited a poetical publication called "The Harp of Renfrewshire." In 1827, he published a valuable collection of ballads under the title of "Minstrelsy; Ancient and Modern;" and, the next year, became editor of the *Paisley Advertiser*, and of the "Paisley Magazine." In 1830, he was made editor of the *Glasgow Courier*, but only filled that post eight years, dying in the year 1838, in his thirty-eighth year.

David Prentice was another Glasgow editor of note. He was the only son of Thomas Prentice, of Lanark, who came of an old stock of fighting lairds, who had fiercely stood by the Covenant,—yet earlier, a moss-trooping, free-booting, rough-and-ready lot. His mother was a niece of James Thomson, the author of "The Seasons." In 1810, he wrote a clever Essay on "The Currency," and another on "Beauty," and was, in the same year, selected as editor

* See *ante*, vol. i. p. 276.

of the *Glasgow Chronicle*, then first started. This paper he long used as a powerful engine against the slave trade, in the abolition of which he took a warm and active interest. He died at Mainhill, near Glasgow, on the 7th of September, 1837, aged fifty-four.

But the name most conspicuous in the modern history of the Scottish press is that of James Ballantyne, the friend and partner of Sir Walter Scott. He was the son of a tradesman at Kelso, in which town he was born in 1779, and educated at the grammar school, then under the rule of one Lancelot Whale. Here he formed a close intimacy with Scott, who was a fellow-pupil, which, interrupted by his being sent up to Edinburgh in 1785-6, was renewed when young Ballantyne, then apprenticed to an attorney, was sent a second time to Edinburgh, to prosecute his study of the law; and finally cemented in a stage-coach journey from London, so firmly that it did not slacken again for the remaining five-and-thirty years of his life. The object of this stage-coach journey, inasmuch as Mr. Ballantyne was concerned, was to engage a staff of writers and correspondents for a newspaper which he had undertaken, under the auspices of the resident gentry, to print and edit, in opposition to a democratic paper which circulated widely in the district. This was in 1795, when Ballantyne was established at Kelso as a solicitor, but with only a small practice; and he soon found printing, in which his taste in typography, and his industry and enterprise in introducing new and superior types, soon gained him a standing, a more profitable trade. At the suggestion of Scott, he afterwards removed to Edinburgh, leaving his younger brother, Alexander, to edit the *Kelso Mail* (which had already had the honour of some contributions from the soon to be world-famed novelist), and, with the assistance and patronage of his old schoolfellow, set up that press from which nearly all Scott's novels afterwards issued, and which was so long celebrated for the beauty and clearness

of its types, and the general excellence of its productions. Among its offspring was a new paper, of which Scott was a part proprietor, and Ballantyne the editor—the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*.* The fall of the publishing house of Archibald Constable and Co., in January, 1826, brought down with it James Ballantyne and Co., involving Ballantyne and Scott in comparative ruin; but they held together in adversity, for Scott had said, the morning he sorrowfully shook his hand with the hand which he himself had just proclaimed a beggar's, "Depend upon it, I will not forsake you;" and he kept his word. Their friendship was rescued, unharmed, from under the ruins of their fortunes. In February, 1829, Ballantyne had the misfortune to lose his wife, the daughter of a wealthy farmer in Berwickshire, and sister to Mr. George Hogarth, of whom we have already had occasion to speak in connexion with the London *Daily News*. Her death was a grievous blow to him. A man of a sensitive nature and domestic habits, he was for a time stunned by it, and retired to the neighbourhood of Jedburgh, to indulge his grief undisturbed. "What can he do, poor fellow," compassionately asks Scott, in recording this sad event in his Diary, "at the head of such a family of children? I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair."† The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* on two occasions threw a shadow between the two friends, and for a time threatened their friendship. It adopted the popular and anti-ministerial side during the trial of Queen Caroline, and afterwards espoused the cause of the Reform Bill. On neither of these points could Sir Walter's high toryism permit him to be silent. He urged

* In speaking of this paper at page 286 of vol. i., we were in error in stating that it still exists. It was dropped some fourteen years ago. We are indebted for this correction to a kind communication from J. H. Maxwell, Esq., author of a series of papers on the Edinburgh Press in the *Scottish Typographical Circular*.

† Lockhart's "Life of Scott." Diary, Feb.—March, 1829.

the right of control belonging to a proprietor, whilst Ballantyne replied by declaring the right of free action possessed by an editor. The dispute on the Reform question had a painful end. These two old and faithful friends parted in what might be called a tiff, and never again met. On the 21st of September, 1832, Sir Walter Scott died, and on the 17th of January; in the next year, James Ballantyne followed him to that bourne where the petty politics of terrestrial powers no longer inflame men's minds, and the sound of discord and disagreement is unheard.

Ballantyne's successor as editor of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was Thomas Aird, a poet of genius, who has edited the poems of Moir (the "Delta" of "Blackwood's Magazine"); but he only held the post a year, being appointed to the editorship of the *Dumfries Herald*, then newly started.

The *Caledonian Mercury* had for an editor, at this time, Dr. Jones Browne, an extensive contributor to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," who died at Edinburgh on the 18th of April, 1841.

But the Edinburgh *Witness*, founded in 1840, as the organ of the Free Church, is the most honoured of the Scottish press, by its having had for its editor for a period of sixteen years, the celebrated geologist and philosopher, Hugh Miller, whose melancholy death last year excited so much sympathy.

The sun which, after running a round of glory, set in a tempest and convulsion, arose in obscurity. Hugh Miller was born in the little town of Cromarty, in 1802, and was only five years old when his father, the owner of several coasting vessels, of one of which he was the master, was lost at sea, and Hugh and the rest of the family were left to depend upon the kindness of their mother's relations. Two of her brothers took charge of Hugh's education: they were but humble handicraftsmen—the one a carpenter and the other a harness-maker; but they gave him the

best education their means could afford, and had hopes of getting him into the Church, but his tastes and inclinations pointed otherwise, and he was at last apprenticed to a stonemason. For three years he was hard at work building farmsteads and dykes, and then, the period of his service having expired, he made his way to Edinburgh, but, apparently not liking the company in which he had to work, he returned in ten months to Cromarty, and worked upon tombstones and monuments round about his native town till 1828, when he visited Inverness. Here he made his first experiment in literature, having sent some verses to the *Inverness Courier*, then edited by Mr. Carruthers; and, although they were rejected, they led to his becoming acquainted with the editor, who had the penetration to discover the colossal proportions of his unhewn mind, and to allow it to disport itself in the columns of his paper. Poor Miller had by this time got married, and the expenses of an increasing family began to exceed the earnings of his labour, and he was induced to contemplate emigration to America; but, unexpectedly he was offered the agency of a large banking company, which proposed to establish a branch at Cromarty; and he set to work to qualify himself for pursuits so far removed from those to which he had been accustomed. He soon became master of his subject, which is often found a tough one for educated minds, and an adept in the principles, as well as the practice of banking. About this time, he gave to the world his "Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland;" and for the next few years was extending his literary connexions, when, in 1843, the disruption of the Scottish Church occurred, and Miller, throwing himself into the breach, wrote and published "A Letter from one of the Scotch People to Lord Brougham." It attracted immediate attention, and his party, who were about to set up a journal of their own, but wanted a competent editor, invited him to the post, and launched the *Witness* upon the

stormy waves of controversy, with Hugh Miller at the helm. But amidst the heavy denunciations and bitter recriminations of the controversy in which he was engaged, there sparkled up in the columns of the *Witness* a light which showed old philosophers what they had never seen before, and attracted, by its brilliancy, students who had looked upon the subject as gloomy and uninviting. Better and more congenial employment for Hugh Miller, to be speculating on the wonders of creation, than wasting the powers of his great mind in an inglorious war! The articles on "The Old Red Sandstone," "First Impressions of England and its People," "My Schools and Schoolmasters," were worth columns of polemical discussion, and so, it was soon apparent, the readers of the *Witness* began to think. Perhaps the style—that clear, lucid, powerful yet graceful language in which they were written—was even more attractive than the subjects. "Where," as one of his reviewers asks, "could this Cromarty mason have picked it up?" When and from whence had he furnished his mind with such vast stores of information? A few years back he was a comparatively uneducated mechanic; now he opens up to our view mines of knowledge, *stratum* lying over *stratum*, that, with such other men as can show them, are the growth of a lifetime of study, and of hard unremitting study too.

Such industry as his was sure to wrest its reward from the hands of Fortune. The *Witness* became his property; the "Testimony of the Rocks" put the seal upon a reputation of which the "Footprints of the Creator" was the diploma, and brought fresh honours from men who were giants themselves, and yet looked up to *him*. But it proved to be the topmost stone of his monument. The great mind lost its balance, its own size and weight toppled it over: it did not lie a miserable wreck to show us how unstable is even mental vigour, but dashed itself to atoms that left but a sound and a sorrow behind.

The number of newspapers throughout Scotland had been steadily increasing up till 1838, when it underwent a temporary reduction, but soon sprang back again and went on enlarging. In 1830, there were thirty-six papers; in 1833, forty-six; in 1836, fifty-four; in 1837, sixty-five; in 1838, fifty-six; in 1839, sixty-six; in 1840, seventy; and in 1847, seventy-seven. In the latter year the following counties did not yet possess a newspaper:—Argyleshire, Banffshire, Berwickshire, Buteshire, Clackmannanshire, Dumbartonshire, Kincardineshire, Kinross-shire, Kirkudbrightshire, Linlithgowshire, Nairnshire, Peebleshire, Ross-shire, Selkirkshire, and Sutherlandshire; and the organ for Shetland was published in London. The circulation enjoyed by these papers may be estimated by the returns of the number of stamps they consumed. From January 1st, 1842, to January 1st, 1843, it was 4,977,344 penny stamps and 443,550 halfpenny supplement stamps. From 1843 to 1844, 5,293,726 penny and 243,150 halfpenny stamps. From 1844 to 1845, 5,727,585 penny and 317,620 halfpenny stamps. The produce to the revenue of these stamps was as follows:—1826 (with the duty at fourpence a sheet of any size, and twopence for a supplement), £22,013; 1827, £29,929; 1828, £33,556; 1829, £42,301; 1830, £42,466; 1831, £52,090; 1832, £51,465; 1833, £48,100; 1834, 49,339; 1835, 47,999, and 1836, 37,453. In this year the duty was altered and the following scale adopted:—For every sheet not exceeding a superficies of 1,530 inches, one penny; for every sheet exceeding 1,530 inches, and not exceeding 2,295 inches, three halfpence; for every sheet exceeding 2,295 inches, twopence. For every sheet of supplement not exceeding a superficies of 765 inches, one halfpenny. The duty then amounted to the following sums:—In 1837, £18,671; 1838, £20,539; 1839, £22,400; 1840, £22,963; 1841, £24,430; 1842, £24,027; 1843, £24,836; 1844, £25,888; 1845, £27,941; 1846, £29,337; 1847, £31,426;

1848, £31,618; 1849, £31,107; 1850, £32,352. Thus, with the duty reduced to a fourth of the original rate, the amount was only £5,101 smaller than in 1836; the revenue had only lost one-seventh, and the public had gained three-fourths. But as part of the reduced duty came into the calculations for 1836, it would be fairer to compare the return for 1850 with that of 1835, when we shall find the loss to have been about one-eighth.

The relative position of the leading Scotch papers at this time will be found in the following table of their circulation for the year 1850, which we quote from M. Cucheval Clarigny:—Edinburgh: the *Scotsman*, 301,000; *Caledonian Mercury*, 106,512; *Courant*, 255,000; *Advertiser*, 150,000. Glasgow: *Evening Post*, 458,000; *Herald*, 391,000; *Courier*, 100,000; *North British Mail*, 229,000; *Scottish Guardian*, 110,00; *Gazette*, 122,000; *Citizen*, 110,000. Aberdeen: *Journal*, 161,000. Dundee: *Advertiser*, 123,000. Dumfries: *Courier*, 104,000.*

There is always a smell of gunpowder hanging about the Irish press: from some quarter or other, it has just fired a broadside at the bugbear of its imagination—the land of the Saxon; and whenever we look that way, there is a cloud of smoke wreathing up, and a paper on its back from the recoil, but we are never wounded. The spirit of the *Union Star* still haunts the offices of half the Irish papers, and occasionally makes itself heard in a fine Milesian brogue, and picks out of some kennel a little Billingsgate and blasphemy, to hurl at our heads. The more polished weapons and adroit fencing of such papers as the *Freeman's Journal* or the *Cork Reporter* are too slow for the hot blood of young Ireland: its rights must be won or its wrongs redressed by the shillelagh, the bludgeon, and the pike; so it dips its pike in ink, and writes with it. For it is not a very bloodthirsty animal, after all; it only daubs itself

* Histoire de la Presse en Angleterre et aux États Unis, p. 205.

over like a printer's devil, and thinks it will frighten us, just as John Chinaman does with his grotesquely-painted shields and banners. Nothing does it rejoice in so much as treason: it rolls over and wallows in it, grunting its satisfaction, till it is covered three or four coats thick with sedition; and *then*—gets up and walks away: we know not whither, but we miss it for a time.

The Government not exactly appreciating the policy of supplying to the Irish press the powder with which it impelled its balls against us, had introduced into the Act of the 55th of George the Third, cap. 80, a clause to the effect that "If any printer or publisher, or proprietor of a newspaper in Ireland, shall be, by a due course of law, outlawed for any offence, or convicted of publishing any seditious libel, the said Commissioners of Stamps are hereby prohibited to send or deliver to or for the use of any such printer, &c., any stamped paper for the printing of news." The prohibition, which of course amounted to the power of suppression just as much as any fiat of a despotic monarch, was put in force against the *Pilot*, Dublin newspaper, in 1834. Richard Barrett, the proprietor, had been sentenced to a fine, to six months' imprisonment, and to find securities for his good conduct, for publishing a seditious letter of Daniel O'Connell's, censuring the Government, in the *Pilot* of April the 8th, 1833. Of course the cry of a "packed jury" was raised, and the subject was brought by Mr. O'Dwyer before the House of Commons, when Feargus O'Connor moved for a committee to inquire into the constitution of the jury. A long and very stormy debate ensued, and a passage of arms between Lord Stanley and O'Connell occurred, in which the polished weapon of the former is seen striking up the pole-axe of his antagonist, and the motion is negatived by 120 votes to 32.*

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. xxii. New Series, pp. 791-820.

The cost of the trial to Barrett was seven hundred pounds, but this was the lightest part of his punishment: for the Government withheld for a time the stamps from the paper, and materially injured its circulation.

It is not pleasant, we confess, to see the Government exercising this prerogative, except under the most threatening circumstances or the most unbearable provocation; and we doubt whether there was sufficient of either in the time or case to warrant the adoption of so severe a measure in this instance: we shall shortly come to a time when it was more justifiable; but, in fairness, we must not shut our eyes to a conviction that the Government *could* be oppressive, and deal unfairly with the Irish press.

On the 2d of April, 1838, the Rev. Mr. Nangle, a Church of England minister, had started, in the island of Achill in the county of Mayo, the *Achill Missionary Herald*, which, although stamped according to law, was stopped for postage in its passage through the London Post-office. The subject was brought before the House of Lords, and party purposes attributed to the Government in stopping the free circulation of the paper. The Marquis of Sligo, speaking on the question, said the island was his property, and he could state that there could not be more than three readers, as the population were poor occupants of cabins; though we cannot see how this affected the merits of the case. If Mr. Nangle chose to print a newspaper for the perusal of three persons (which must be owned to be rather an eccentric proceeding), those three persons should have the right of sending it through the Post-office, after they had indirectly paid the postage in the price, under the tacit sanction of the Government stamp, although they might be, as well as the island on which they lived, the property of the Marquis of Sligo.

Another abuse of the relations which should exist between the Government and the press was the extra-official character of the *Dublin Gazette*. The patent of that journal

was, up till about this time, held by a private individual, who charged the Government for its announcements just the same as if they had been ordinary advertisements; but in September, 1836, the then holder of the patent, Mr. Price, surrendered it to the Government, for a superannuation allowance of fifteen hundred pounds a-year. After that time it was resolved that no Government advertisements should be charged for, and that the profits derived from the paper should go into the public purse.

The culminating point of the Repeal agitation of Daniel O'Connell (now best remembered by the grotesque caricatures of the principal "traverser" going through his gymnastic exercises in gaol, putting one in mind of a bear at the top of a pole), which involved a Government flushed with temporary victory in the dishonour of an almost instant defeat, was the fourteen days' trial, which commenced on the 15th of February, 1844, of the heads of the Repeal Guy, for a conspiracy to create discontent and disaffection among the people. Among these candidates for a patriotic martyrdom were John Gray, of the *Freeman's Journal*, Richard Barrett, of the *Pilot*, and Charles Gavan Duffy, of the *Nation*, all Dublin papers. The sentence pronounced upon the gentlemen of the press for "writing" the sedition, which the others were charged with "uttering," was lighter than that passed upon the chief conspirators, and they were ordered to be imprisoned for nine months, to pay a fine of fifty pounds each, and to find sureties, themselves in a thousand pounds and two householders in five hundred pounds each, to keep the peace for seven years. The verdict was, however, afterwards appealed against, the judgment reversed, and the "Liberator," and his faithful squires of the press, escorted in triumph through the streets of Dublin. The Repeal agitation made great capital of this prosecution, and the circulation of the "persecuted" papers rose in proportion.

But dissension crept into the camp of the conspirators.

The Old Irelanders liked the game they had been playing so well, that they would have gone on playing as long as it could be made to last: it was a profitable game—all prizes and no blanks!—as long as the "rent" came regularly into the pool. The younger, hotter, more impetuous, and more sincere portion, who had gone on believing that the crafty old hands had intended what they proposed, and were themselves impatient for the fray, and anxious for the work of barricades and battles which were to secure to Ireland the liberties of which so much was talked, had just discovered that the powder was watered: the cannon-balls hollow bubbles: the bullets paper pellets: and their leaders no more than tinsel heroes dressed for the character on the stage or the platform, but assuredly never meaning to take the field. With a howl of disgust that might have rent the roof of Conciliation Hall, they burst from their perjured colleagues, and formed themselves into a separate confederation. The *Freeman's Journal* and the *Pilot* elected to remain with the old party; the *Nation* went over to the new. But among these hot spirits there was soon a division of counsels; a section was for immediate action, and John Mitchell, the advocate for an instant appeal to arms, seceded, and set up the *United Irishman*, to enforce his views, whilst Richard D'Alton Williams and Kevin Izod O'Dogherty shortly afterwards started the *Irish Tribune* to strengthen the cause. For shining talent, approaching to genius, the band of the *Nation* must bear the palm; for ferocity, amounting almost to bloodthirstiness, the *United Irishman* and the *Irish Tribune* were soon conspicuous.

The *Nation* was established by Charles Gavan Duffy, on the 15th October, 1842, and was for some time edited by Thomas Davis,

> "The pale-browed enthusiast,
> He whose heart broke, but shrank not from the strife;
> Davis, the latest loved: he who in glory passed,
> Kindling Hope's lamp with the chrism of life."

But on the untimely death of this gifted but infatuated young man, it fell under the management of John Mitchell, till Duffy, alarmed at his editor's violence, severed the connexion. Some of the most beautiful songs that ever breathed treason were published in the columns of this paper, by clever impetuous young men, who sought with the light of genius to kindle the flame of rebellion. They were collected in a volume, published in 1844, under the title of "The Voice and Spirit of the *Nation*," and, in the signatures, we recognise the initials of Thomas M'Nevin, W. J. O'Neil Daunt, and W. M. Downes, while many of them might have been owned with credit by Thomas Moore. John Fisher Murray, an author not unknown in London, and once a contributor to "Fraser's Magazine," was one of the writers for the *United Irishman;* whilst in the staff of the *Irish Tribune*, were Thomas Carleton, the author of "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry," and the "Black Prophet," who contributed an original tale called the "Evil Eye," Stephen J. Meany, M. Doheny, and W. T. Meyler.

The first number of the *United Irishman* appeared on the 12th of February, 1848, and was so eagerly sought after, that, although the price was fivepence, copies were sold for eighteenpence and two shillings. Its motto was from Theobald Wolfe Tone:—"Our independence must be had at all hazards. If the men of property will not support us, they must fall. We can support ourselves by the aid of that numerous and respectable class of the community, the men of no property;" and its avowed object was "to sweep the island clear of the English name and nation." Week by week it pointed out by what means this cherished object was to be effected. It pointed out how, in street-fighting, troops could be best harassed from the parapets, and how barricades could be constructed.

On the 4th of March, it describes some nice murderous

weapon easy to make and convenient to handle, and adds —"To these missiles, from windows and house-tops, revolutionary citizens always add boiling grease or water, or better, cold vitriol, if available: molten lead is good, but too valuable."

On the 11th, it asserts the following amiable sentiment as the gospel of all patriots:—"We must utter and maintain the God-sent truth—the decree that is in the hearts of us all: hate England to the death!"

The 18th finds it animating its party with these reflections:—"A strong English reaping-hook is a capital weapon; and, in case of street-fighting, let no powder be too explosive, or no instrument be too hot for fair hands to lift and hurl down upon the enemy!"

Suggestions, some the most murderous, others the most puerile, for the injury of England and English interests, sentiments breathing the most deadly hatred to everything English, went forth every week in its columns. It advocated arming, drilling, and preparing for ultimate fighting, with the subsidiary measures of running upon the savings banks, abstaining from the use of excisable articles, and corrupting the soldiery. The manufacture of all weapons of offence—pikes, scythes, and daggers—was explained and made easy; impromptu grenades of soda-water bottles filled with combustibles, and missiles of the most murderous description to be thrown upon the troops, and balls covered with spikes to be cast under their horses' feet, were strongly recommended: its articles were headed, "The Enemy's Parliament," "The Enemy's Army," "The Enemy's Press,"—in short, it was just such a paper as might have emanated from a mad Irishman with a cross of the fiend in him. Its fourth number announced the abdication and flight of Louis Philippe, and the outbreak of that revolutionary flame which spread over Europe like a fire in the prairies. John Mitchell, the editor, was the eldest son of an Unitarian minister, and of a lady of good family, named

Haslett, whom he had married when young. He was born at Londonderry, in 1816; but, his father shortly afterwards removing to Newry, the young incendiary's youth was spent in that town. Designed by his father for the ministry, he graduated B.A. at Trinity College, Dublin, but, on leaving, selected the law for a profession, and was apprenticed to Mr. Quinn, a respectable solicitor of Newry. On the expiration of his articles, having married a Miss Verner at the early age of seventeen, he went into partnership with a Mr. Frazer, but the excitement of politics allured him to Dublin, and, in 1846, he succeeded Davis as editor of the *Nation*,* which he left, in resentment of Duffy, the proprietor, suppressing some of his violent articles, and started the paper which was to send him, a convict, to Bermuda.

The authorities long had their eye upon him, and they soon had their hand upon his shoulder. The bursting of the storm on the Continent had worked him into a frenzy of violence, and, on the 13th of May, he was arrested and committed to Newgate, for the publication of three seditious articles, at the same time that William Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher were proceeded against in like manner for seditious speeches. The new Felony Act, for "the protection of the Crown and Government," had just been passed, and was now, for the first time, put in force. The Special Commission was opened on the 21st, by Baron Lefroy, and the prisoner's counsel, Sir Colman O'Loghlen and Mr. O'Hagan, at once applied to have the indictment quashed. This was successfully resisted by the Crown, and the trial went on. Notwithstanding an impassioned appeal on behalf of Mitchell, and in his own vein, by his counsel, Mr. Holmes, the jury returned a verdict of "Guilty," and, on the 26th, sentence was pronounced, in the midst of a scene of tumult and violence—transporta-

* *Irish Tribune*, No. 1, June 10th, 1848.

tion for the term of fourteen years—in pursuance of which, he was, next day, removed to Spike Island, and from thence, shortly afterwards, to Bermuda. The day after Mitchell's conviction, the 27th of May, the last number of the *United Irishman* appeared. But it was only to return to life with blacker blood, fiercer mien, and feller purpose; for, on the 24th of June, there started into existence from the press which had produced it, an avowed continuation, under the title of the *Irish Felon*, of which the tone was more warlike than even its predecessor's. It was edited by John Martin; and among its contributors were, James F. Lalor, Thomas Devin Riley, Thomas Francis Meagher, Joseph Brennan (who was a sort of sub-editor), and G. H. Kerim.

In the meanwhile, and on the 10th of June, 1848, the *Irish Tribune* had been started by Richard D'Alton Williams and Kevin Izod O'Dogherty, two young gentlemen who had been brought up to the medical profession, and equalling its contemporary in violence, caused such a weekly din of sedition, that it became evident the Government would have to put it down with the strong arm. Even the *Nation*, the mildest of the rebel press, held such language as this:—"Obedience to the Government is a high crime—alliance with it is a conspiracy against the nation."—"Ireland's necessity demands the desperate necessity of revolution: it demands and will justify before God and all men really made in his image, the last resource of nations long oppressed." Such language, addressed to a generous, warm-hearted and warm-blooded, sensitive and excitable people, jealous of their honour, proud of their nationality, and alarmed for their liberty—language endorsed and repeated by a priesthood who were masters of their souls, could not be uttered long without producing mischief. At the sale of John Mitchell's effects, which succeeded his conviction, there were sold a large quantity of pikes which he had collected (and high prices they fetched,

too,—from one to two guineas each), and his collection was not the only one; it was known that the people were arming. The rebel press must be put down, or the country would be up. On the 8th of July then, Duffy of the *Nation*, Martin of the *Felon*, and Williams and O'Dogherty, the proprietors, and Denis Hoban, the printer, of the *Tribune*, were arrested. The *Tribune* died without a struggle, but not without a groan. On the 15th, the following advertisement appeared in the *Felon*:—"The proprietors of the *Irish Tribune* desire to state that the highway robberies committed according to law on their property, by the lordly accomplice of Spanish bravoes, and Dublin detectives, have so crippled their resources, for the present, that they cannot to-day offer the usual amount of Felony to their admirers and readers. They mean, however, to reappear on the field of journalism, now daily becoming more perilous, on Wednesday next, or on Saturday at farthest. In the interim, they can assure their friends, that it is not in the cells of this prison, nor in the scaffold before it, to alter one sentiment that they have written or uttered. Kevin I. O'Dogherty, R. D'Alton Williams. Newgate prison, July 12th, 1848." Notwithstanding their pledge, the *Tribune* did not reappear. It would have been hopeless to revive it: for the Government would only again seize its press as it had done before, and arrest every vendor who should dare to circulate or sell it. The *Felon* had become contraband, and was sought for and seized by the police, and on the 22d of July came to a sudden stop; neither of these "felon" papers getting beyond its fifth number. O'Dogherty, Williams, Duffy, and Hoban were brought to trial in August, but got off by the jury being dismissed as not likely to agree; but Martin was not so fortunate—he was found guilty with a recommendation to mercy, and sentenced to transportation for ten years. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, which followed Smith O'Brien's valorous "rebellion," gave the Govern-

ment the power to seize the presses and commit the printers,—a power which they exercised so freely, that the felon press of Dublin was soon extinct. Two attempts were made to blow life into it; and, to appear on October the 7th, were announced two war papers, the *National*, to succeed the *Nation* and be published at Dublin, and the *Irish Advocate*, to be published at Drogheda. But the Government made short work of it; they peremptorily refused to issue stamps to either of the projected papers, and arrested the parties whose names appeared upon the prospectuses. Finding all their efforts to revive the revolutionary press fruitless, some of the conspirators set sail for America, and, in October, reared the standard of the *Nation* in the congenial atmosphere of New York. Of this new series, Mr. D'Arcy Magee, who had been a contributor to the old one, was appointed editor.

If we shudder at the excesses of the felon press of 1848, we must remember that its writers had to shudder at sights more terrible. They were surrounded by famine, fever, and extermination—the most agonizing distress, the most heart-rending misery, the most hopeless poverty. They daily saw starving families of ten and twelve ruthlessly driven out of what it would be desecration to call a home, but of the hovel that had covered them from the weather—their rags and sticks tossed after them; and flung out—the fever-stricken infant, the pregnant mother, and the starving father—to perish on the road or in the ditches where they cowered for shelter. Let us, then, take this into consideration, before we blame, too hastily or too severely, young and impetuous men, of warm feelings and hot passions, who had hearts and pity in them. They were carried, it is true, into unwarrantable excesses, and, in their fury, suggested measures at which civilisation shudders; but it is only justice to say that there could not be a better man in all the relations of private life than John Mitchell, the inventor of the bottle-grenades and infernal machines.

And it must be further and thoroughly understood that, rash and headstrong as these young writers were, their earnestness and sincerity are without the shadow of a doubt upon them.

And what course, besides the open one of prosecution and seizure, did the Government take, in coping with this rebel press? Some awkward disclosures were afterwards made in the course of a trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, which let us into the secret: the *World*, a Dublin newspaper of small circulation, not exceeding six to eight hundred weekly, and edited by James Birch, a clever but not over-scrupulous man, was subsidised by the powers of the Castle. The selection of the *World* was not a very happy one; for, in 1845, Birch had been tried on a criminal information for attempting to extort money from a Mr. Grey, by threatening to publish, in his journal, the particulars of some proceedings in which Grey had been some years before engaged, and for the suppression of which he had already received a hundred pounds, but now pressed for a larger amount. On that occasion he was found guilty, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment in Newgate. What the terms were, by which the pen of Birch was bought, we are not told, but it is admitted he received large sums for writing "in the cause of law and order," Lord Clarendon or his agents paying him, at various times and in various sums, seventeen hundred pounds. The rebellion crushed, the Lord Lieutenant would have discharged the gentleman who wrote for law and order; but he was not to be got rid of so easily. His lordship was fairly committed, and Birch was not the man to forego the advantages of his position. He threatened the Lord Lieutenant with an action for the balance due to him, and Lord Clarendon, to avoid the exposure of a public trial, and at the suggestion of his friends, paid him a farther sum of two thousand pounds, on his executing a release from all further demands.

Three thousand seven hundred pounds did not, however, satisfy Mr. Birch; so he handed in his little bill to the Chief Secretary Redington, whom he declared he looked to for payment, as the party who had instructed him. The document is a curiosity in newspaper history, and deserves to be preserved:—

"To composing, printing, and publishing articles in support of the existing administration, from the 16th day of July, 1848, to the 10th day of January, 1851, (balance) £6,050.

"Attending the Secretary and *his* Secretary, weekly, during said period in reference to the composing, printing, and publishing of the said articles, at £5 per week, £650.

"To 12,000 copies of the *World* newspaper, at 6*d.* per copy, in which said articles appeared, published and distributed by Chief Secretary's order, to himself, peers, members of Parliament, clubs, and news-rooms, and forwarded to France, America, and the Colonies, and to leading parties throughout England and Ireland, £300.

"Making, in all, a balance of £7,000."

To this cool demand the Chief Secretary demurred, and Birch, with a degree of hardihood which one almost admires, brought his action in the Court of Queen's Bench in Dublin, and summoned the Lord Lieutenant as his witness. The trial took place on the 5th and 6th of December, 1851, and, for the first time in the annals of the country, the Viceroy marched into the witness-box,—the bench and bar rising to receive him—and was sworn upon his honour. The facts of the "hiring" could not be disproved, and some curious correspondence was produced; but beyond the pain which it must have caused to the Lord Lieutenant, and the scandal which it raised, Birch got nothing by the motion. A resolution moved by Lord Naas in the House of Commons on the 19th of February, 1852, condemnatory of the conduct of the Irish Government in these transactions, was lost by 137 to 229.

The number of papers published throughout Ireland had been fluctuating in the following manner:—In 1830, it was 60; in 1833, 75; in 1836, 78; in 1837, 71; in 1838, 77; in 1839, 89; in 1840, 90; and in 1847, 80. The number of copies circulated throughout Ireland by those papers was:—In 1842, 6,063,906 newspapers and 35,750 supplements; in 1843, 6,452,072 newspapers and 142,580 supplements; and in 1844, 6,769,067 newspapers and 249,550 supplements. The relative rank and position of the leading Irish papers as displayed by their circulation in 1850, was as follows:—DUBLIN: *Saunders' News Letter*, 756,000; *Freeman's Journal*, 442,000; *Evening Mail*, 315,000; *Tablet*,* 162,000; *Nation*,† 108,000. BELFAST: *Northern Whig*, 285,000; *Banner of Ulster*, 123,000. CORK: *Constitution*, 180,000; *Southern Reporter*, 168,000; *Examiner*, 161,000. LIMERICK: *Chronicle*, 165,000.

The experience of the Irish press presents ample proof that it is not a high duty that produces a large revenue. The advertisement duty had been twice raised, and each time to a large extent, and each time the revenue had declined. In 1812, with the duty at eighteenpence, the Irish papers had paid £26,950; but, in 1830, a duty of half-a-crown was only producing a revenue of £14,985. Considering that the number of newspapers had so largely increased, we may conceive how greatly the number of advertisements had fallen off. Yet, with these results before their eyes, the Government of 1830 would have put on what would have been tantamount to an increase of 83 per cent. on the stamp, and 40 per cent. on the advertisement duty, and have subjected all charity advertisements, heretofore free, to the operation of the duty.

* Edited by Mr. Lucas, a seceder from the Church of England. It had been lately transferred from London, for which its violent tone was ill adapted.

† Returned from its visit to New York.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS—HOBART TOWN—WESTERN AUSTRALIA—NEW ZEALAND—HONG KONG—CAPE OF GOOD HOPE—INDIA—CHINA—THE MAURITIUS—THE MEDITERRANEAN—CANADA—BRITISH NORTH AMERICA—THE WEST INDIES—THE CHANNEL ISLANDS—THE MALAY PENINSULA—PERSONAL SKETCHES—THE NEWSPAPER AFLOAT—ABORIGINAL NEWSPAPERS—"SANDWICH ISLANDS GAZETTE," ETC.—A ROYAL LICENCE—ANGLO-CONTINENTAL PAPERS—MIXED PAPERS—AN EDITOR BEATEN.

We have yet to measure the growth of the Australian press, during the quarter of a century since we were witnesses of its birth. In 1827, the *Hobart Town Courier* was established, under the editorship of James Ross, LL.D., who died in the colony, in August, 1832; a rival, in the shape of the *Colonial Advocate*, by A. Bent, appeared in the next year. At Van Diemen's Land, John P. Fawkner started the *Launceston Advertiser*, in 1829, and S. Dowsett, the *Cornwall Press;* and next year, Mr. Dowsett established the *Independent*. Another colony had been added to the dominions of England—Swan River, now better known as Western Australia; it was founded on the 1st of June, 1829; and in 1830, a Mr. Gardner had started a manuscript newspaper at Perth, the seat of government. Even before this, newspapers in manuscript had been affixed to the trunks of trees, for general perusal. In 1831, Messrs. Charles M'Faull and W. K. Shenton originated two other MS. papers; but the first printed journal was the *Freemantle Observer*, started by Mr. M'Faull, in 1832, but which only lasted three months. The second paper, called the *Western Australian*, the

enterprise of a Captain Graham, was equally unsuccessful, and the press was not *established* in the colony, till Mr. M'Faull founded the *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, on January 8th, 1833. It for some years enjoyed the Government patronage, and on the decease of its original editor, came into the hands of Mr. Shenton. It has had two competitors—a scurrilous paper called the *Swan-River Guardian*, edited by Mr. Nairn Clark, long defunct; and a very clever one, the *Inquirer*, founded, and at first edited, by Mr. Francis Lochée, and afterwards by Mr. Richard West Nash, a barrister, but now under the management of Mr. Robert Sholl.*

The press in New Zealand had its origin in the *New Zealand Gazette*, the first number of which was published in London, and the second at Wellington, on the 18th of April, 1840. The second paper was the *New Zealand Advertiser*, begun at Kororakika, Bay of Islands, 12th of June, 1840.

On the cession of the island of Hong Kong, in 1842, a small newspaper was almost immediately established at Victoria, the new capital, called the *Friend of China*.

The number of English newspapers published in our possessions at, and eastward of, the Cape of Good Hope, at this period, was as follows:—Cape of Good Hope, in 1840, 11. India, in 1839: Calcutta, 26 European (of which 6 were daily), 9 native; Bombay, 10 European, and 4 native; Madras, 9; and one each at Loodianah, Delhi, Moulmein, Agra, and Serampore. Pulo-Penang (east of the Ganges), in 1840, 1; Ceylon, in 1840, 3; New South Wales, in 1841, 8, of which one was daily; Port Phillip, in 1840, 4; Van Diemen's Land, in 1840, 11; South Australia, in 1840, 4; Western Australia, in 1846, 3; New Zealand, no return. China: Hong Kong, in 1845, 5; Singapore, in 1840, 2; Mauritius, in 1846, 2

* *Swan-River News*, vol. iii. p. 84.

(*Le Cerneen*, and *Le Mauricien*, both in the French language). In our Mediterranean possessions, Malta possessed, in 1830, about 12 newspapers, and Gibraltar 1 daily paper. Over British North America, Canada, and the West Indies, &c., they were thus distributed:—Canada, in 1840, Upper, 28; Lower, 11 (of the latter, 8 were English and 3 French, the former with a circulation of 29,000, and the latter, 8,000 weekly); Newfoundland, in 1840, 9; New Brunswick, in 1840, 14; Prince Edward's Island, in 1839, 2; Nova Scotia, in 1839, 15; Bermuda, in 1840, 2; the Bahamas, in 1840, 2; Honduras, in 1840, 2; British Guiana, in 1842, 1; Cape Breton, in 1840, 1. West Indies, &c., in 1840: Demerara, 4; Jamaica, 10, of which two were daily; Barbadoes, 6; St. Kitt's, 2; Grenada, 2; Tobago, 2; Antigua, 2; Dominica, 2; St. Lucia, 2; St. Vincent, 3; Trinidad, 2. Channel Islands, in 1845: Guernsey, 4; Jersey, 9; Isle of Man, 5.

The personal history of the Colonial press during the period under review presents few features of interest, but those few are of the true old Saxon order. Far away on the Malay Peninsula, there was started, as long ago as 1826, the *Malacca Observer and Chinese Chronicle*. The place had been for three centuries under European power, and there had never been a paper till it came more thoroughly under English influence, and then the press was speedily at work. The *Malacca Observer* was partially written by Dr. Robert Morrison, the eminent Chinese linguist, who was born of Scotch parents, at Morpeth, North Britain, on the 5th of January, 1782; in 1811 achieved the arduous task of printing the Acts of the Apostles, in the Chinese language, from wooden blocks, after the Chinese manner, and died at Canton, on the 1st of August, 1835, the paper having dropped six years before.

The first daily paper published in our West Indian possessions, the *Jamaica Royal Gazette*, was the speculation

of Alexander Aikman, a Scotchman, born of respectable parents at Borrowstownness, in Linlithgowshire, on the 23d of June, 1755. At the age of sixteen he left Scotland, and proceeded to South Carolina, where he apprenticed himself to a bookseller of Charleston and the printer of a newspaper in that town. The outbreak of the War of Independence drove our loyal Scotchmen from the country, and, after roaming about for some time, he settled at Jamaica, and, in 1788, founded the *Jamaica Mercury*. Two years after its foundation, it was honoured with the patronage of the Government, and then assumed the more sounding title of the *Jamaica Royal Gazette*. Aikman was another of those model apprentices who marry their masters' daughters. Louisa Susannah Wells, the second daughter of the printer of Charleston, to whom he had apprenticed himself, had been cast back by the revolutionary tide which overflowed America upon the shore of England; but her thoughts dwelt upon that steady young fellow who had worked in her father's office, and, at last—whether by his invitation, or not, we are not told—she started on the wings of love for Jamaica; but poor little Cupid and his passenger were caught and caged—that is to say, the ship in which she had taken passage was captured by the French, and poor Miss Wells detained for three months a prisoner in France. Soon after her release, she made a second effort to reach Jamaica, but, this time, she had got on board a smuggler, which was taken and brought by a king's ship. Her third attempt to reach Jamaica was successful, and she was married to Aikman on the 14th of January, 1788, and bore him two sons and eight daughters. But fate still held fast the resolution of locking up one or the other of this adventurous pair; for, in 1795, Aikman himself, visiting England on business, was captured by a French privateer, and consigned for a short period to a French prison. Returning to Jamaica, Aikman, in the course of time, resigned the *Royal Gazette* into the

hands of his eldest son, Alexander, became a member of the House of Assembly, and for some years enjoyed the repose which he had earned by hard work; but his son dying on the 11th of April, 1831, and leaving a large family, our worthy printer-editor resumed the paper for a time till permanent arrangements could be made for its management; and, in 1838, having completed his eighty-third year, went peacefully out of the world.

At whatever part of the world the British flag waves, there flourishes in security beneath it the newspaper. The stout, sturdy Saxon carries with him into the back-woods and the primeval forests of the Antipodes or the Poles, his faith in the power and protection of the press; the daring Arctic explorers find but one cardinal relief for the dulness of Polar winters, and that is the newspaper that records the doings of their little world set in an universe of ice. The "Great Britain" steamer set sail on her first voyage from Liverpool to Australia, on the 21st of August, 1852, and, on the 4th of September, the first number of the *Great Britain Times* was circulated on board in six manuscript copies. The paper was continued weekly in this manner till the arrival of the ship at the Cape of Good Hope, where the papers were collected and printed.

The emigrants who go out to colonize a new country, select at once two sites—one the most favourable for the expounding of the Bible; the other the most prominent for the exhibition of their little manuscript Gazette. The first party of settlers at Swan River nailed their newspaper upon a tree, to be conveniently read by all.

Nay, the very aborigines, who have satisfied their stupid wonder at the hard-working white men, adopt this, perhaps, at first sight, the most inexplicable of their customs, and set up native organs to protect their interests instead of the tomahawk or the scalping knife, which have failed in the face of powder and the press. In India alone there

were, in 1830, eight native papers published in Bengal, and four in Bombay, of which only two were in existence in 1820. In 1839, Calcutta had nine weekly native papers, and Bombay had four. In 1839, six or eight Gazettes were published in Bengalee, and in 1846 three in Persian. Early in the year 1828, a newspaper was started among the Cherokees, the *Cherokee Phœnix*, edited by Elias Bondinott, and published "for the Cherokee nation." It contained five columns, and was nineteen inches long and twelve wide. This paper, half in Cherokee and half in English, was, it is true, under the shadow of the stars and stripes; but, in 1848, a newspaper called the *Anglo-Maori Warder* was published in New Zealand, half of it in the language of the aborigines. Where the English rule is not established, but where Englishmen congregate, there—in plague-stricken towns in the East, on the burning sands of the South, in the far backwoods of the West, by the ice-bound coasts of the North—there, strange in its liberty, and in strange contrast to the state of things around it, is the English newspaper! In 1835, a newspaper of eight octavo pages, illustrated with wood-cuts of animals, &c., and called the *Sandwich Islands Gazette*, was started by Mr. Stephen D. Mackintosh at Owhyhee. The firman, or letters patent, or whatever is the term for the licence which was granted to Mr. Mackintosh, ran thus:—

"To Stephen D. Mackintosh.

Hololulu, Oahu.

"I assent to the letter which you have sent me. It affords me pleasure to see the works of other lands and things that are new. If I was there, I should very much like to see. I have said to Kivan, Make printing presses. My thought is ended. Love to you and Reynolds.

"By King Kainkeaguoli."

His friendly majesty afterwards gave permission for a second paper, the *Polynesian*, with which the *Gazette* was incorporated in 1839.

In 1838 two English weekly newspapers were tolerated at Canton, the oldest of which, the *Canton Register*, was started on the 7th of November, 1827, and the next, the *Canton Press*, in 1836. In 1839, an English paper was commenced at Smyrna, by Mr. W. N. Churchill, called the *Manzari Shark*.

Coming back to Europe, we find the *Roman Advertiser*, established by Mr. Hemans, at Rome, in 1846, and the *Brussels Gazette*, representing English interests in the English language at Brussels. In 1844, there were two English newspapers in France—*Galignani's Messenger*, appearing every morning and afternoon at Paris, and the *Boulogne Journal*, weekly, at Boulogne. By the way Cyrus Redding was, from 1815 to 1823, editor of Galignani's paper.

In countries which we have wrested from the hands of another nation, it is singular to see the newspapers of the old rule existing beside those which have started up since the conquest. Thus, at the Cape of Good Hope, some of the papers are printed half in Dutch and half in English. But in Mauritius we have the pure French newspaper, *feuilleton* and all, in *Le Cerneen* and *Le Mauricien;* in Lower Canada, we find about twelve of the old French papers; in Guernsey (cheek-by-jowl with the *Comet* and the *Star*), is *Le Gazette de Guernsey;* in Jersey, there are *Le Chronique*, *Le Constitutionnel*, *L'Impartial*, *Le Jersais*, and *Le Miroir*.

The editor who planted his standard and set up his press, among elements of society where the newspaper was not yet recognised as a power of the State to be respected, was obliged to rough it and to run unpleasant risks. Should any future D'Israeli collect the troubles of editors, let him not overlook the following, with which we must

close our perhaps prolonged view of the Colonial and Anglo-Foreign Press:—

"1835, March.—Henry Winter, editor of the *Public Ledger*, published at St. John's, Newfoundland, set upon by five or six ruffians, with their faces blackened, who cut off his ears and part of one of his cheeks, and otherwise ill-treated him. A reward of two hundred pounds has been offered by the Government for their discovery."*

* Timperley's "Dictionary of Printers and Printing," p. 937.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851—ITS EFFECTS UPON THE NEWSPAPERS—CHARLES KNIGHT'S PROJECT—THE STAMP AND ADVERTISEMENT DUTIES—A COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS APPOINTED TO CONSIDER THEM—ITS REPORT—MILNER GIBSON, COBDEN, HUME, AND EWART—A SERIES OF RESOLUTIONS PROPOSED—THE ADVERTISEMENT DUTY CONDEMNED—A NEW QUESTION RAISED—THE QUESTION TRIED—SEPARATE RETURNS OF STAMPS ORDERED—GIANT GROWTH OF THE "TIMES"—THE RUSSIAN WAR—THE "TIMES" IN THE FIELD—WILLIAM HOWARD RUSSELL—THE "MORNING HERALD"—MR. WOODS—LORD RAGLAN AND THE PRESS—HIS PRIVATE LETTER TO THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE—THE DUKE'S CIRCULAR—THE ARMY SAVED BY THE PRESS—UNSTAMPED WAR PAPERS OF 1852—THE STAMP DUTY AGAIN ATTACKED—TOTTERING TO A FALL—SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.—DUFFY AND MIALL—HENRY DRUMMOND'S REMARKABLE SPEECH—THE NEWSPAPER STAMP NO LONGER COMPULSORY—PROVISIONS OF THE NEW ACT—EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION—RELATIVE STANDING OF THE WIDEST CIRCULATED PAPERS—NEWSPAPERS IN CAMBRIAN—COMPARATIVE SCALES OF CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS—ENORMOUS AMOUNTS ANNUALLY SPENT IN THEM.

THE opening of the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations afforded plenty of material for a time for the London and provincial newswriters. Monster supplements and extra numbers were issued to keep pace with the curiosity of the public, who wanted to know all about the goings-on of the huge glass beehive, as well as a detailed account of its contents. The absorbing interest attaching to the subject raised the circulation of every newspaper for the time it lasted: but, from the very nature of its plan, of course the *Illustrated London News*—which could convey to the mind's eye of country cousin all that her London correspondent had been seeing in the week—derived the greatest benefit.

The time was seized by Charles Knight, the publisher of the "Penny Magazine" and the "Penny Cyclopædia," to put to the test a novel experiment in newspaper production. By taking off its outer sheet and substituting another, his paper could be transformed from a London to a country paper. The internal sheets were to contain all the general news, so arranged that the country printer need only to add a sheet outside with his local title, news, and advertisements, and he produced a first class paper. The new journal came out under the title of *Charles Knight's Weekly Newspaper*, but it proved a failure.

The subject of the Stamp and Advertisement Duties had now again begun to be ventilated in the House of Commons. It was proved that the Advertisement Duty hung like a millstone around the neck of the Press and clogged the wheels of commercial enterprise: for while, the duty being at three shillings, there had only been seven or eight hundred thousand published annually, now, with the duty at eighteenpence, there were 2,334,593. The revenue, too, derived from this source, which, before 1833, was £170,000 per annum, was now £157,000: so that the revenue had only lost a thirteenth part whilst the duty had been reduced one-half. And it was so rapidly recovering from the shock, that there could be little doubt of its not only getting back to its former amount, but even exceeding it in a few years.

The final campaign was now approaching which was to remove the last badge from the Press, and to shiver to pieces the die which the Government of Queen Anne had moulded for stamping it. On the 21st of March, 1850, Lord Brougham and Earl Fitzwilliam had presented petitions, numerously signed, in favour of the repeal of both the Stamp and Advertisement Duties: and, on the 7th of May, Mr. Ewart had moved, and Mr. Gibson seconded, a resolution, that "It is expedient that the Advertisement Duty be repealed." This, however, was negatived by 208

votes against 39. The time was not yet come, but it was coming fast, and new and vigorous champions were heralding its approach and preparing the way for the final triumph. There were Mr. Milner Gibson, with his stout backer, Mr. Ewart, the member for Walsall; and Cobden and Bright, with a dislike to duties in general, ever ready to oppose this one in particular and to answer the call of Milner Gibson.

The Press was agitating the question, and the *Times*—then itself paying £66,000 a-year for stamps—seemed willing to risk the competition, and hailed the prospective advent of a free and cheap press.

At length, on the 7th of April, 1851, Mr. Gibson got a Committee appointed by the House, and ordered to consider the subject, with ample power for calling witnesses and taking evidence, upon which we find the names of the abolition party predominant. This Committee sat seventeen days, and examined twenty-three witnesses: amongst whom were Mr. Mowbray Morris, the manager of the *Times;* Mr. F. Knight Hunt, the sub-editor of the *Daily News;* Mr. Michael James Whitty, the editor and proprietor of the *Liverpool Journal;* Mr. Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman;* Mr. T. Keogh, the Assistant Secretary, and Mr. Timm, the Solicitor, to the Board of Inland Revenue; Mr. Rowland Hill, &c. The decision at which this Committee arrived was favourable to the repeal, and the closing paragraph of their Report sums up the ground on which they came to it:—"In conclusion, your Committee considers it their duty to direct attention to the objections and abuses incident to the present system of newspaper stamps, arising from the difficulty of defining and determining the meaning of the term 'news:' to the inequalities which exist in the Newspaper Stamp Act, and the anomalies and evasions that it occasions in postal arrangements: to the unfair competition to which stamped newspapers are exposed with unstamped publica-

tions: to the limitation imposed by the stamp upon the circulation of the best newspapers: and to the impediments which it throws in the way of the diffusion of useful knowledge, regarding current and recent events, among the poorer classes, and which species of knowledge, relating to subjects which most obviously interest them, calls out the intelligence by awakening the curiosity of those classes. . . . . Apart from fiscal considerations, they do not consider that news is, of itself, a desirable object of taxation."*

In his evidence before the Committee, Mr. Knight Hunt broached the subject of the copyright of news. He suggested that the newspaper proprietor, who kept up a large staff of correspondents all over the world, and, by the aid of special trains, special steamers, and special messengers, at enormous expense and with the greatest pains and enterprise expressed the news they had to relate, and by day and night worked it up for his readers' information, should have some vested right in that news, and have it secured to him as his property for at least a certain number of hours. He did not claim copyright for police reports, or mere ordinary news, but only for that brought from afar at a fabulous cost, but which could be stolen by a penny paper, and given to the public in two hours after its publication, the original proprietor being thus deprived of the just and honest reward of his enterprise. But this was merely incidental.

Truth to tell, the Stamp Duties were getting into a sad state of confusion again; and it was hard to tell—for lawyers and judges disagreed—what *was* a newspaper, according to law.

By way of supplement to his "Household Words," Mr. Dickens had been publishing, unmolested, a monthly "Narrative" or summary of public events. At length,

* Reports of Committees, Session 1851, vol. xvii.

the Commissioners of Stamps, guided by their legal advisers, demanded that this publication should be stamped as a newspaper. The demand was resisted by Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, the publishers, and, in November, 1851, the question was brought to an issue in the Court of Exchequer, when three of the judges ruled that the "Narrative" was not liable to the stamp duty, whilst one was of opinion that it was. The Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, and the leading Counsel of the Board of Inland Revenue, also protested that the paper should be stamped. This uncertain state of the law was made a subject of conversation in the House of Commons on the 22d of April, 1852, in the course of a motion for the repeal of the paper duties, made by Mr. Milner Gibson, and seconded by Mr. Ewart; and, ultimately, a motion was founded on it, on the 12th of May, that the newspaper stamp duty should be abolished. The Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed it purely upon financial grounds, as not to be spared in the state of revenue at the time; and the motion was lost by 199 votes to 100.* A subsequent motion that the tax upon advertisements should be repealed was also negatived by 181 votes to 116.

The simple way of cutting the Gordian knot being rejected, the next Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Disraeli, got leave, on the 6th of December, 1852, to bring in a Bill which should exclude, beyond a possibility of doubt or dispute, all monthly periodicals from the pressure of the Stamp Act; but the ministry of Lord Derby falling shortly afterwards, the Bill fell to the ground.

On the 14th of March, 1853, Gibson, Hume, and Cobden again urged the repeal of the Stamp Act upon the new Government, but, getting no pledge or even promise of it, Mr. Gibson, on the 14th of April, moved three separate

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. cxx. (Third Series), pp. 983-1028.

abstract and declaratory resolutions. The first of these resolutions was, "That the Advertisement Duty ought to be repealed." The second ran thus:—"That the policy of restraining the cheap periodical press from narrating current events, by rendering it liable to stamp duties and other restrictions, 'if any public news, intelligence, or occurrences, or any remarks or observations thereon, be contained therein,' is inexpedient, and at variance with the desire now generally expressed in favour of the diffusion of knowledge amongst all classes; and it appears also to this House, that the law relative to taxes on newspapers, and other regulations affecting public prints, is in an unsatisfactory state, and demands the attention of Parliament." The third resolution had reference to the repeal of the paper duties generally. Mr. Gibson, in opening the debate, gave an able and elaborate history of the Stamp Duty from its first imposition, and was warmly seconded by Mr. Ewart.*

The sole upholder of the duty at first was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who claimed it from financial considerations. Messrs. Bright, J. L. Ricardo, J. G. Phillimore, Digby Seymour, and W. Williams, followed in succession in favour of the resolutions. This brought up the Attorney-General to the rescue of his comrade, now assailed on all sides. Mr. William Arthur Wilkinson followed him in favour of the repeal, and Lord John Russell next rushed into the field

* Whilst anxious to give Mr. Milner Gibson every credit for his elaborate, and in the main accurate, statement, we must yet protest against the looseness with which the titles of their authorities are often cited by members of Parliament. Thus Mr. Gibson says he got some of his facts from "Mr. *Henry* Hunt's 'History of the Newspaper Press,' just published," —no such work ever having been so much as heard of before; but Mr. Frederick Knight Hunt's "Fourth Estate; or Contributions towards a History of Newspapers, and of the Liberty of the Press," being meant. How pregnant are such careless oversights with future disputes and doubts! Pity that Mr. Gibson did not turn to the title-page of the book he was quoting!

against it. Mr. Disraeli now got up, and, declaring that the Government of Lord Derby had intended to abolish the duty, but that, whilst taking steps with that view, they were called upon to ask for a supplementary grant for the public service, gave in his adhesion to Mr. Gibson. Mr. Sidney Herbert raised his voice for the Government, but it was drowned by those who followed him, Cobden, Sir J. Pakington, Macgregor, and Maguire. The division on the first resolution showed that a victory was gained, and, amid immense cheering, the House affirmed that "the Advertisement Duty ought to be repealed." The second resolution, affecting the Stamp Duty, however, was lost by 98 votes to 280; and the third, relating to the Paper Duties, was also rejected.* The thin end of the wedge was in, and the Advertisement Duty, as it stood, was doomed.

The Board of Inland Revenue now became more exacting than ever. They had laid it down as the law, that "any paper containing public news, intelligence, or occurrences, printed in any part of the kingdom, to be dispersed and made public," was a newspaper, no matter whether published periodically or not; and Mr. Timms, their solicitor, had peremptorily ordered a tract detailing the life, trial, and execution of a malefactor at Bristol, to be stamped, under this monstrous interpretation of the law! Mr. Collett, the proprietor of the *Stoke-upon-Trent Narrative of Events*, a paper started to try the question, was exchequered, and the *Potteries Free Press* was put down by the pressure of fines obtained at a police court. In the case of a penny *Dublin Commercial Journal*, the Board sought to recover penalties from Mr. Shaw, the proprietor, for publishing an unstamped newspaper. The defence, founded upon three pleas, was ingenious. Firstly, it was argued that the publication was not a newspaper, inas-

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. cxxv. (Third Series), pp. 1118-87.

much as it contained only "a little news," and not sufficient to constitute it one in the sense contemplated by the law: secondly, that it contained no political news: and thirdly, that whereas fiction was not news, but news must be fact, the *truth* of the alleged news had not been proved! The judges ruled in favour of the defendant on the first plea, that the paper did not contain sufficient news to constitute it a newspaper, and the jury gave a verdict accordingly. The prosecution, however, cost Mr. Shaw a hundred pounds. This decision left the question still open as to how much news was required to make a newspaper in the eye of the law—"a little news" was a very indefinite term; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, although he at first pronounced the ruling of the judges to be wrong, and declared that he would go on prosecuting Shaw till he could get some court of law or jury to come in to his views, was fain to bring in a Bill, which received the royal assent on the 15th of August, 1853, entirely exempting all monthly publications from the newspaper duty.

The weekly periodicals still had to bear the persecutions of the Commissioners—for persecution it really began to resemble. Whilst the *Athenæum*, the *Lancet*, the *Builder*, *Punch*, and other publications were allowed to be stamped or not stamped at their own option, or to have a portion of their impression stamped for their own convenience of circulation by post, Mr. Novello, the proprietor of the *Musical Times* (which had been published for ten years unstamped), and Mr. Thompson, the printer of the *Racing Times*, were threatened with the pains and penalties of the law, unless they had their papers stamped. The proprietors of the latter paper boldly refused, and declared themselves ready to contest the point in the courts of law. The Commissioners had caught a Tartar, and troubled the *Racing Times* no more!

The next year another step was gained in the now rapidly approaching reform. Mr. Gibson had resolved to

make his motion for the repeal of the newspaper stamp duty an annual one until it was carried—to break through the prejudices or break down the patience of the House of Commons; and on the 16th of May, 1854, he moved that the laws affecting newspapers are "ill-defined and unequally enforced, and it appears to the House that the subject demands the early consideration of Parliament." The motion was seconded by Mr. Kinnaird, and the Government showing some symptoms of yielding, the resolution was agreed to. Thus, not shocking the prejudices of the House too violently by insisting upon an immediate repeal, he had got a declaration that the subject should be looked into—which was half way towards gaining it.

Another motion affecting the Press was made by Mr. Sharman Crawford on the 28th of February in this year. It was for a publication of the returns of the number of stamps issued to each journal in the kingdom, which had been withheld for the last few years on the representation of some of the newspaper proprietors that it was calculated to injure their property. The Chancellor of the Exchequer at first opposed the motion, but seeing the feeling of the House, he gave way, and the return was ordered.

It was said that much of the agitation for the repeal of the stamp duty was levelled against the growing influence and rapidly increasing circulation of the *Times*, which the establishment of a cheap press would tend to check. But we do not place much confidence in either statement. In the first place, we believe the desire for a cheap press to have been only a part of the wish for the diffusion of knowledge among the many—pure, simple, and sincere; and secondly, no cheap paper could ever encroach very seriously upon the circulation of the *Times*. No penny or twopenny print, however liberally conducted, could afford to plant and maintain its special correspondents everywhere—and the legislators, the country gentlemen, the men of business, the speculators, *must* have their daily breakfast

of universal and detailed intelligence. The *Times* has its correspondents in every place of any consequence in the world. Doubtless Thackeray had it in his eye when he wrote of the press,—"There she is—the great engine—she never sleeps. She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world—her couriers upon every high road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are ubiquitous. Yonder journal has an agent at this minute giving bribes at Madrid, and another inspecting the price of potatoes at Covent-garden."* Such arrangements would always be far beyond the reach of a low-priced journal. The *Times* was certainly advancing by giant strides, and when any subject of public interest occurred, it shot up like a rocket above its ordinary circulation. On the 19th of November, 1852, the number containing a memoir of the Duke of Wellington was sold to the extent of 69,000 copies, the ordinary daily circulation then being 36,000. This was the highest number it had yet reached, even on extraordinary occasions. On the 28th of January, 1846, the report of Sir Robert Peel's statement on the Corn Laws raised it to a sale of 51,000 on an ordinary circulation of 23,000: the day after the French Revolution, the 29th of February, 1848, 43,000 copies were sold, the regular circulation being 29,000: and the day after the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851, 52,000 copies were printed.

But the *Times* now took a step unparalleled in the annals of journalism—unprecedented in the history of enterprise. It realised Thackeray's statement, that "her officers march along with armies;" and, on the outbreak of the war with Russia, sent its special correspondent to the seat of war in the Crimea, to accompany our invading army, and record, day by day, its exploits. The selection made by the managers was a judicious one. Mr. William Howard Russell was picked out from their staff of parlia-

* Pendennis, by W. M. Thackeray.

mentary reporters, and sent upon his important mission. Mr. Russell is a native of Dublin, where he was born in 1806, and educated at Trinity College. Coming to London, he entered himself student-at-law at the Temple, but soon trod the path which so many students had trod before —to Printing House-square, and was engaged as reporter on the *Times*. From this post he was tempted by a better offer to the *Morning Chronicle*, on the staff of which he remained for some years; but, returning to the *Times*, became one of its parliamentary reporters, at the same time acting as the London correspondent of two Irish papers. Some natural jealousy was at first felt at a newspaper correspondent being allowed to accompany an army in the field, and a fear entertained lest the publicity which would be given to all its movements might embarrass the plans of generals, and make the enemy acquainted with their designs. But Mr. Russell's gentlemanly bearing and general urbanity of manners soon stifled the one, and his judicious and discreet conduct proved the other groundless; and, we believe, he has no reason to complain of the footing on which he stood with the army, which the public give him, by acclamation, a great deal of the credit for saving from the fatal effects of mismanagement, inexperience, and neglect. Certainly the Government had no information on some points of vital consequence to the very existence of the army; and the public would never have had any upon many more, but for the warnings and disclosures and the fearless revelations of Mr. Russell in the columns of the *Times*. The style, too, in which his exciting narratives were written was refreshing, and smacked of a mind as polished as it was vigorous.

The *Morning Herald* followed in the footsteps of the *Times*, and sent out Mr. Woods as its special correspondent in the field; and that gentleman's reports have been preferred by some to Mr. Russell's, as being more truthful and less florid. Both Mr. Russell's and Mr. Woods'

despatches have been since collected and re-published in a complete form.

The other papers were now forced to supply original information from the field, and, to the dismay and embarrassment of Lord Raglan, a swarm of newspaper correspondents landed in the Crimea; and each naturally vied with the other in getting, and sending to the paper which employed him, the earliest information of the plans and intentions of the allied generals, which were, in two instances at least, completely frustrated thereby. At length Lord Raglan could endure the difficulties no longer, and, in a private letter to the Duke of Newcastle, dated November the 13th, 1854, he says:—"I have requested Mr. Romaine to endeavour to see the different correspondents of the newspapers, and quietly point out to them the public inconvenience of their writings, and the necessity of greater prudence in future: and make no doubt they will at once see that I am right in so warning them. I would suggest that you should cause a communication to be made to the editors of the daily press, and urge upon them to examine the letters they receive before they publish them, and carefully expunge such parts as they may consider calculated to furnish valuable information to the enemy." In pursuance of this suggestion, the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of War, addressed a circular to the editors of the newspapers, in which he says:—"Many complaints have reached me of the advantages conferred upon the enemy by the publication of intelligence from the seat of war, not only in letters from the correspondents of the English newspapers, but in letters written by officers to their friends at home, in the spirit of confidential intimacy, and which those friends send to the newspapers, from feelings, no doubt, of pardonable vanity, but without consideration of the evil consequences to the army and the public interests. I feel assured that I have only to appeal to your patriotism to ensure a rigid supervision of all such letters,

and an endeavour to prevent the mischief of which Lord Raglan so reasonably complains." *Tempora mutantur!* Here was a letter from a Cabinet Minister to a newspaper editor, not only without a hint of the pillory or the stocks, not even threatening fine or imprisonment, but temperately and quietly soliciting what no patriotic or discreet editor could refuse. For it was not as if the fighting had been in India: but the hints and disclosures dropped in the newspapers were flashed in a few minutes to the ruling spirit of the strife, and by him despatched, as fast as horse could gallop or courier ride, to the enemy's camp. The publicity of this newspaper correspondence from head-quarters was a novelty in warfare; it was an experiment not unattended with great and grave inconveniences, but there is no doubt that, on the whole, it was productive of far greater advantages to the country. Through it, and it alone, the attention of the nation, if not of the Government, was first and forcibly directed to the canker-worm which was eating at the heart and spirit of the army.

The Russian War might have been expected to stand in the way of any measure for the abolition of the duty: certainly it did not seem at first capable of being shaped into an argument in favour of it; but Mr. Milner Gibson, with ready tact, used it as a lever by which he shook the fabric of the stamp duties, so that it soon tumbled to pieces in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Lucas, the editor of the *Tablet* (who was a member of the House), having, on the 20th of June, and Sir John Shelley on the 7th of July, failed in getting any distinct promise from the Government, Mr. Gibson gave them a fillip on the 14th of December. The Solicitor for the Board of Inland Revenue, distracted with questions as to the definition of a newspaper, had, in his extremity, declared what was *not* one—namely, a publication treating of only one subject. On this hint there sprung up a host of unstamped papers, giving full details from the seat of war,

but dealing in war news only, which was precisely the only news that people cared about reading. There were *Holt's Army and Navy Dispatch*, *Strange's Army and Navy Dispatch*, the *War Times*, the *War Telegraph*, the *War Fly Sheet*. Now, argued Mr. Gibson, as the interest of the nation, and especially the poorer classes, is engrossed in the war, you are allowing a monopoly to these papers to the injury and ruin of the general newspapers, which have to pay for a stamp. The Russian War had lent powder to the resolutions passed by the House last year, and they blew the newspaper stamp to pieces.

On the 19th of March, 1855, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed to the House a series of resolutions for abolishing the newspaper stamp as a tax, and converting it into a matter of postal convenience, allowing it to be optional with newspaper proprietors to use it or not for the circulation of the whole or any part of their impression, but not at present interfering with the regulations which affected the stamp as a means of postage.* The Bill came up for a second reading on the 26th of March, when Mr. Deedes moved its postponement till a more convenient and propitious season. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the veteran advocate of the abolition, made a powerful speech in favour of the original motion, in the course of which he paid the following compliment to the *Times*:—

"If I desired to leave to remote posterity some memorial of existing British civilisation, I would prefer—not our docks—not our railways—not our public buildings—not even the palace in which we now hold our sittings: I would prefer a file of the *Times* newspaper."

The Attorney-General followed on the same side, supported by Lord Palmerston, Mr. Duffy of the *Nation* (who was by this time in Parliament), and Mr. Miall,

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. cxxxvii. (Third Series), pp. 774-814.

formerly an Independent minister, who had started the *Nonconformist*, in 1841, and was now member for Rochdale. Sir Francis Baring, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Packe opposed the measure—not on its merits, but from a consideration that it ought to be deferred till the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made his financial statement. But the most extraordinary speech of the evening was that of Mr. Henry Drummond, who attacked the press in unmeasured terms, and, in a speech as full of talent as of madness, declared it had too much liberty already. The second reading was, however, carried by 215 to 161.* Some slight modifications were made in Committee on the Bill on the 23d of April,† and, on the 30th, the Chancellor of the Exchequer attempted to introduce a clause securing to the newspaper proprietor the copyright of his news for four-and-twenty hours, but he had to withdraw it.‡ The Bill had got another struggle before it, and, on the motion for the third reading, on the 7th of May, Mr. Vansittart moved its adjournment for six months.§ The debate was resumed on the 11th, when the amendment was lost by 60 votes to 138;‖ and the Bill went up to the House of Lords. Here Viscount Canning took charge of and introduced it, and it was read a second time on the 24th of May, Lord Monteagle recording his protest against it on fiscal considerations.¶ Finally it received the royal assent on the 15th of June,** and became the law of the land.

The provisions of this Act may be thus epitomised:—

18 and 19 Victoria, cap. 27. An Act to amend the laws relating to the Stamp Duties on Newspapers, and to

* Hansard's "Parliamentary Debates," vol. cxxxvii. (Third Series), pp. 1109-67.

† Ibid. pp. 1656-86.

‡ Ibid. pp. 1978-2046.

§ Ibid. vol. cxxxviii. pp. 184-98.

‖ Ibid. pp. 442-53.

¶ Ibid. pp. 952-70.

** Ibid. p. 2018.

provide for the transmission by post of printed periodical Publications.

Sec. I. It is not to be compulsory to print newspapers upon stamped paper, except for the purpose of free transmission by the post; and no person shall be any longer subject to any penalty for printing, publishing, selling, or having in his possession, an unstamped newspaper.

II. Stamped papers to circulate by post free, under certain restrictions to be named.

III. Such papers—to go free by post—shall be printed and published at intervals not exceeding thirty-one days between any two consecutive parts or numbers, and the stamping to be arranged thus:—each of the sheets shall be stamped with an appropriate die, denoting the amount of duty now paid, and on the top of every page shall be printed the title and date of publishing; and to be folded so that the whole of the stamp shall be exposed: and shall not be printed on pasteboard, or cardboard, or on two thicknesses of paper pasted together.

IV. Printers or publishers may send in their own paper to be stamped; and the discount on stamps for Irish papers is continued.

V. Papers, so stamped, to be posted within fifteen days of the date of publication.

VI. The Postmaster-General and Lords of the Treasury to have the power of finally deciding as to what newspapers are entitled to the privilege of stamping.

VII. Newspaper proprietors may, on payment of a fee of five shillings, have their papers registered at the General Post-office for transmission abroad.

VIII. IX. X. XI. and XII. Various details as to size, &c., and the re-enactment of the old provisions and regulations affecting the stamp as a means of postage.*

The immediate and visible effect upon the Stamp Returns was as follows:—

* Bristow and Hastings' "Statutes of 1855," pp. 20, 21.

	Number of Penny Stamps issued between 1st July, and 31st December, 1855.	From July to December, 1854 (halving the return for whole year).
England . . .	15,498,094	45,949,492
Wales	193,860	553,717
Scotland . . .	2,680,122	4,705,252
Ireland . . .	3,274,612	4,524,038
Total. . .	21,646,688	55,732,499

Showing a falling-off of some four-and-thirty millions in number, or one hundred and fifty thousand pounds in amount. We must warn our readers that these returns are not to be taken as indicating the number of actual newspapers circulated, for we find in them upwards of three hundred circulars, price currents, catalogues, and reports, which the issuers had got stamped for convenience of transmission, and which bore the somewhat ludicrous red impression, "T. Cox Savory's Price-List Newspaper," or "Gartside and Sons' Wool-Circular Newspaper." Of these, there are 288 included in the return of 1854 for England; 16 for Scotland; and 8 for Ireland. Consequently, the falling-off of stamps consumed by real newspapers was comparatively greater than the returns show, as the circulars, trade lists, &c., would continue to take the same number of stamps as before.

The estimate which the Stamp Returns enable us to form of the relative position of the most widely circulated papers in the country at this period, is as follows:—

LONDON DAILY PAPERS.

Times	15,975,739	*Daily News*	1,485,099
Morning Advertiser .	2,392,780	*Morning Herald* . .	1,158,000

LONDON WEEKLY PAPERS.

News of the World . .	5,673,525	*Reynolds' Weekly Newspaper*	2,496,256
Illustrated London News	5,627,866	*Weekly Dispatch* . . .	1,982,933
Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper	5,572,897	*Bell's Life in London* .	1,161,000
Weekly Times	3,902,169		

ENGLISH COUNTRY PAPERS.

Liverpool Mercury . .	912,000	*Manchester Examiner* .	636,000
Leeds Mercury	735,000	*Staffordshire Advertiser* .	425,633
Stamford Mercury . .	689,000	*Leeds Times*	421,500
Birmingham Journal .	650,750		

WELSH PAPERS.

Yr Amserau	237,700	*Monmouthshire Merlin* .	110,425

SCOTCH PAPERS.

North British Advertiser	808,002	Edinburgh.	*Glasgow Saturday Post*	727,000	Glasgow.
Scotsman	359,000		*North British Mail* .	595,000	
			Glasgow Herald . .	541,500	
			Aberdeen Journal .	202,000	

DUBLIN PAPERS.

Telegraph	959,000	*Daily Express*	748,500
Saunders' News Letter .	756,000	*Freeman's Journal* . .	480,000

IRISH COUNTRY PAPERS.

Northern Whig . . .	262,000	*Cork Constitution* . . .	208,000
Belfast Daily Mercury .	210,000		

Amongst the returns of the Welsh papers, we have the euphonious titles of *Yr Amserau, Y Cymro, Y Gwron, Cymrig*, and *Yr Haul.*

It will be observed that the question of the Advertisement Duty remained in abeyance; and, although some hopes were expressed that it would soon be swept away, the advocates of a cheap press seemed content for a time with the concessions they had gained, and looked on calmly for the results, warmly combating the fears and apprehensions of a large number that a host of seditious and blasphemous newspapers would at once spring up and overrun the country. Whether they were right or wrong, we shall see in our next chapter. But the mention of advertisements gives us an excuse for publishing the following curious statement, which shows that the scale

of charges for advertisements is not, in all instances, regulated according to the amount of publicity they are likely to get. The same announcement was charged for in different papers, in the month of January, 1855, as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Examiner	0	3	6
Times	0	4	0
Daily News	0	5	6
Morning Chronicle	0	5	6
John Bull	0	5	6
English Churchman	0	5	6
Morning Herald	0	6	0
Morning Post	0	6	0
Spectator	0	7	6
Observer	0	9	6
Athenæum	0	10	6
Punch	0	15	0
Illustrated London News	1	8	0

The enormous extent to which the system of advertising had become developed may be judged by the following statement of the sums annually expended by large advertising firms in making known their wares or callings:—

Holloway, Pill and Ointment Manufacturer	£30,000
Moses and Son, Outfitters	10,000
Rowland and Sons, Macassar Oil Vendors	10,000
Dr. De Jongh, Cod Liver Oil Rectifier	10,000
Heal and Sons, Bedding Manufacturers	6,000
Nichols, Tailors	4,500

The *Times* of the 24th of May, 1855, in one of its ordinary numbers, contained 2,575 advertisements.

CHAPTER XIX.

FOUR YEARS OF AN UNTAXED PRESS—NO MISCHIEF YET—PENNY DAILY PAPERS—A HALFPENNY PAPER ATTEMPTED—PENNY WEEKLY PAPER—CHEAP ILLUSTRATED PAPERS—ENORMOUS SALE OF THE CHEAP PRESS—PROVINCIAL PENNY PAPERS—DOUBLE SHEET PENNY PAPERS—THE "STANDARD"—LOCAL OR DISTRICT PENNY AND HALFPENNY PAPERS IN LONDON—LIST OF THEM—THE ONLY DANGER OF A CHEAP PRESS—CLOSING REMARKS.

THE breaking loose of all the ogres of Atheism and Infidelity; the Reign of Terror, in which sedition and blasphemy were to be openly preached by a cheap and corrupt press; the political and social convulsion; the deluge of mischief and avalanche of evil, which were largely expected to follow the repeal of the Stamp Act, did not occur. The comet which was to rush madly through our sphere, and dash little social worlds to pieces, disappointed its prognosticators. The morning papers which had sold at fivepence dropped the price of unstamped copies to fourpence, with the exception of the *Times*, which demanded an additional halfpenny for its supplement; the weekly papers which had sold for sixpence now returned a penny in change, and the threepenny ones, which had sprung up since the abolition of the fourpenny stamp, were now sold for twopence. These were for the moment the only visible effects of that knocking away of the floodgates which was to cause an inundation. Then came announcements of penny papers, and timid politicians began to tremble, and look with apprehension for the first daily paper which, by its price at least, should address itself to the masses. It soon appeared—*The Daily Telegraph and Courier*—and the terrorists drew a long breath when they found its tone was calm, and it did not advocate civil war, murder, and

rapine. Then came the *Morning Star*, with its evening twin-brother the *Evening Star*, and the timid politicians, still more relieved, said, "Really these penny papers are conducted very well, and may not bring about the ruin of the country after all." The *Morning News*, a sucker thrown up by the *Morning Chronicle*, completed the army of the cheap press, which it had been feared would consign London to flames. Another cheap evening paper, the *London Evening News*, which afterwards took the title of the *Day*, was tried at a halfpenny, but broke down before long. Some very creditable weekly papers were started at twopence, but only one, *Bell's News*, we believe, at a penny. An insane attempt to get up a *Coloured News* of course failed, but the *Illustrated Times*, the *Picture Times*, and the *People's Times*, threatened, if they did not stifle each other by crowding too thickly into one single patch of newspaper enterprise, to damage the trade of the *Illustrated London News*. The two last named, however, soon became absorbed in the first; a speculation of the late Mr. Bogue, the publisher, of Fleet-street; and the *Illustrated Times* stepped into the category of first-class papers, though only raising its price to twopence halfpenny. The circulation of the existing cheap weekly papers of course increased marvellously; and it is by them that the effects of the repeal will be most sensibly felt. They are essentially the papers of the poor. Published ready for the day of the workman's rest, at a price which he can spare without missing from his week's wages, they, of all other papers, must feel the benefit of coming still nearer to his means. The difference between twopence and threepence is to the working man much greater than governments or mere club politicians can divine. He could read a newspaper through, by spending twopence at a public-house; but now he can get it to read leisurely and quietly at home for the same money, which he could not do before because he grudged the extra penny. The

penny daily papers appeal for support to a different class; the working man, going home with his basket of tools slung over his shoulder, does not stop to buy the *Evening Star;* it is the mercantile or banker's clerk, who, fagged and jaded, has had no time to read the news except the few minutes he snatched at dinner-time, whilst his meal was getting cold. The enormous extent to which the class below him in social position, but scarcely in intelligence, purchases the weekly papers, is displayed by the circulation attained by the cheap press, as shown in the return for 1854; for, with three exceptions only, none but the cheap papers had attained a circulation of a million annually. And it is observable that, in the list of those which had exceeded that number, there does not occur the name of one leading paper: in some respects, the *Weekly Dispatch*, or the *Illustrated London News*, might be called so; but we use the words in the sense which applies them to such papers as the *Examiner*, the *Spectator*, the *Press*, the *Saturday Review*—papers both springing from and suggesting deep reflection, and a serious consideration of public events. It is also gratifying to perceive that the calmest of these cheap weekly papers, the *News of the World*, had the largest circulation, whilst the most violent, *Reynolds' Weekly Newspaper*, had the smallest.

In the provinces several new penny papers, some daily, sprang up on the repeal of the stamp duty, principally in the manufacturing towns; but only two or three, we believe, survive.

The experiment of single sheet penny daily papers having been tried in London, and found successful, the hazardous venture of a double sheet paper of the same price was made. The *Standard*, which had long been a decaying property, falling from the hands of its proprietor (Mr. Baldwin), had been converted into a morning paper, at twopence; but offering no advantages over its penny contemporaries, it again changed hands, and was started,

with the beginning of 1858, as a double sheet paper, at the price of a penny. The circulation rose incredibly, and for a little time it had the field to itself, till the *Daily Telegraph* found it necessary to bid against it, and doubled its size also. About the same time, a new Conservative evening paper, to take the place of the *Standard*, and in connexion with the *Morning Herald*, was started at twopence, and called the *Evening Herald*; and the *Atlas*, which had been a high-priced paper, suddenly reduced its price to twopence. Such is the extent of the revolution which the repeal of the newspaper stamp duty has at present brought about in the press world of London: its effects have yet more fully to be felt by those of the old established journals, which were somewhat weak before, and have failed to strengthen their position by commercial alliances with newspapers of the new order; and we may expect to see some doze off into a sleep from which they will never wake.

But the most singular, and, perhaps, unexpected result was the starting, all over London, of a local or district press. This result is, in our opinion, not the least valuable which has attended the abolition of the duty. The immense and rapid growth of the metropolis precludes the possibility of the general newspapers noticing and correcting special and merely local grievances, which, nevertheless, may threaten the lives and happiness of thousands. Cases of petty tyranny by parochial authorities; of excess or neglect of duty; of peculation or reckless extravagance; of nuisances unprevented, offences unprosecuted, and wants unsupplied; which it is their duty to attend to, are constantly occurring; but even if the *Times* could spare space to make it known every time the parish engine was out of order, or the parish pump wanted repair, it could not afford time or room to keep constantly repeating the complaint, till the matters were set to rights. There is always a danger of such small district papers

falling into personalities, if not scandal; but we admit the new local press took a higher ground at once, and has well maintained it.

We have before us a collection of these local prints, and we must confess that, in the details of the "getting up," as regards typography and dua quality of paper, most of these excel their more general contemporaries of the same or a little higher price. With the very existence of many of these we dare say most of our readers are unacquainted, yet they circulate by thousands in their respective districts. We believe our collection wants three which were started early, but soon fell to the ground: a *Tower Hamlets Gazette*, an Islington, and a Finsbury paper. The following is a list of those before us, with their head-quarters and price:—

		d.
City Press	City	1
Clerkenwell News	Clerkenwell	½
East London Observer	Stepney	1
Finsbury Herald, originally the *Time o' Day for Hoxton*	Hoxton	1 ½
Hackney and Stoke Newington Journal, afterwards *North London Advertiser* (defunct)	Stoke Newington	1
Holborn Journal	Holborn	1
Islington Gazette	Islington	½
Islington Times	,,	½
Lambeth Observer	Lambeth	½
Marylebone Mercury	Marylebone	1
Metropolitan Advertiser	Holborn	1
News of the Week	Bloomsbury	
North London Record	Clerkenwell	½
Pancras Reporter	St. Pancras	1½
Ratepayers' Journal (monthly)	,,	1
St. Luke's News	St. Luke's	¼
St. Pancras Times	St. Pancras	2
Shoreditch Observer	Shoreditch	½
South London Journal (established 1845)	Southwark	4
South London News	,,	1½
South London Times	,,	½
Tower Hamlets Mail	Hackney	1
West Middlesex Advertiser	Chelsea	1
Westminster News	Westminster	½

The majority of these are very creditable publications; some go beyond the circle of parish news and politics, and give the general foreign and domestic intelligence of the week; and all of them are crowded with the advertisements of local tradesmen; the *Clerkenwell News*, perhaps the most widely circulated of them all, having some three hundred weekly. These advertisements are admitted at a low scale of charges, and afford the tradesmen of their districts a medium for making known their addresses and prices, such as no other papers could offer them.

We might have been expected, perhaps, before closing our work, to let the general public into those secrets into which many would fain pry, as to the *personnel* of the newspapers of the present day; and undoubtedly the subject has a tendency, as it loses the historic, to assume an individual interest. But we count this no part of our task, and must disappoint such as open these pages with a view to see what manner of men are now at work with this great engine, the Press. In the first place, we consider they have no clear right to know, and that the information, if given, would be useless; and in the second, we possess but little knowledge ourselves. Besides, as a distinguished proprietor, of whom we sought particulars of the history of his paper, but who mistook, or chose to misunderstand, our meaning, declared, it is precisely the information "which the conductors of the press are bound in honour, as well as by interest, to conceal."

As it is, we have traced the growth of the Press into a giant of strength; a power which, well directed, is the greatest public safety, or, abused, the greatest public danger. May its conductors be ever armed with courage, and guided by discretion—beyond the reach of corrupt influences, and above the power of popular clamour, ever proclaiming what is just, right, and true. To know that they are so is sufficient; it is unnecessary to be told when and where each of them was born, or what is his

personal appearance. And bold and fearless, yet just and discreet, let it be their study to continue. Let them not be dazzled by the light which shines around them into the belief that the Press can do no wrong, or should be screened from its just penalties if it do; but exercise a jealous self-control; for the power which they wield is fearful.

In these days liberty of the Press is never in danger where a censorship does not exist, and trial by jury does. We do not see why its supposed friends should endanger it by insisting upon a thorough immunity for it. If juries err, they always err in its favour; and to claim for it an exemption from all the obligations which bind the other estates, is to sap its foundations, and to bring it down, as well as to countenance a grievous injury to society. The paper which lives by systematically stealing men's characters is deserving of a heavier punishment than the man who steals their purses;—the paper which preaches anarchy and sedition is something worse than the drunken brawler of the streets. At all events, we cannot clearly see that a cry should be raised of "the press in danger," when a thing that can only claim connexion with the public press in its higher sense, from the fact of its being printed periodically, is prosecuted for the safety of society. It is not so in the other professions: if an advocate betray his duty, or a merchant his trust, his fellow advocates or merchants cast him out from among them, and do not attempt to question the propriety of his being punished. Yet private individuals are not possessed of the power of self-defence against any persecution of the laws, such as a journalist can use. This is the only danger that we can foresee in the cheapening of the Press—that, appealing to a class whose passions are less tutored and restrained, it can gather a mob, and raise a cry of "Rescue!" if the law lays its hand upon some assassin whom it should scorn to shelter with its privileges.

We have confidence in a jury; for we know that, in the hands of a jury, the Press is safe. Much of the youthful talent, breaking loose from college restraints, and not yet sobered down by the expediencies of the day, or the drier study of the law; much young and hot blood, much noble spirit, not yet tempered by experience; and poetical fire, inspiring grand but visionary ideas, are, from time to time, infused into the Press. Young men, full of genius and ambition, with the Utopian ideas of generous and enthusiastic minds, submit theories which they would realise with their life's blood; and there is always a fascination in such theories, mixed with an admiration of their freshness and honesty. But however grand, however noble, would they be practicable, or otherwise than ruinous to society? Journalists seldom make good statesmen: they are not practical enough. We have scarcely an instance of the contrary in our history; whilst the story of the last French revolution shows them to be the very reverse.

Then again, older, craftier, and more selfish men, with all to gain and nothing to lose by anarchy and a *scramble*, may look for spoil and pelf in a convulsion which they could ferment; needy adventurers, and threadbare disputants, could inflame the combustible elements which exist at the bottom of every society, by their ill-used and profitless talents; and are we to say that there shall be no restraint upon them? Is it safe to society—is it consistent with morality—is it, above all, just to the deep-thinking statesmen of the Press, who have thrown down ministers for the public good, or upheld them for the national safety? We know it will be said—and we grant it—that such men as the last two classes are composed of, cannot promulgate their doctrines through the medium of the papers—would be refused admission into the forum from which the public is daily addressed and lectured. But is it not competent to them to set up papers of their own,

which will address a wider and less instructed class—a more profitable occupation, even, for such as them: to light the train that shall explode the mines which already exist beneath the surface of society? And shall there be nothing to restrain them, because, forsooth, they can raise a husky cry of "The Liberty of the Press"? If such a principle be once admitted—and we survive its immediate consequences—the liberty of the Press is lost to us for ever.

We have been led into these remarks by a conviction that, if ever caution, discretion, and judgment were needed in the management of the Press, they are eminently necessary in those who conduct the young cheap press; and perhaps not a little from fancying we have descried, in one or two instances, a proneness in that section to deny the right of any restraint, however legal, or necessary for the public safety. Let us hope we are mistaken; and that a vain and foolish notion, which their seniors never harboured, may find no place in the creed of a Press which is destined to educate and enlighten those classes whose political knowledge has been hitherto so little, and by consequence so dangerous.

The list of our public journals is a proud and noble list—the roll of an army of Liberty, with a rallying point in every town. It is a police of public safety, and a sentinel of public morals. Its watchfires are so numerous and so bright, that no native despot nor foreign invader could ever hope to extinguish them. They are to be seen from all parts of the world, and form a chain of communication with Freedom wherever it exists. Long may they be seen, burning brightly and purely, gathering together all true men and just, and driving the evil-doer into the darkness where shame delights to hide!

For good or for evil, the Press must go on now: no power on earth can arrest it. Hundreds of thousands have been added to the number who look to it as a necessary

of their existence. When the advertisement duty and the duty upon paper come to be repealed,—and they assuredly will be in a few years—the last restraint will have been removed. It will then be for its conductors to see that their unlimited power be not abused—and we can trust them. None of the old restrictions can ever return. Untaxed and unfettered, except by the laws which bind society together, experience seems to show us, that we need apprehend no evil from this great intellectual reform, whilst its power for good is unlimited. Let bad or designing men who may at any time seek to use this great engine as a tool for working mischief or raising discord, be ever confounded, and find, to their destruction, that it is a machine which, turned back or forced the wrong way, will fly and shatter them to pieces; while, worked with skill and judgment, it is capable of making a great country greater, and a people incalculably happier.

AND SO GOD SPEED THE BRITISH PRESS!

A KEY

TO THE

PSEUDONYMS OF SOME NEWSPAPER-WRITERS.

Advocate of the Cause of the People, an	*Public Advertiser*	John Horne Tooke.
Babbler, the	*Public Ledger*	Hugh Kelly.
Bickerstaff, Isaac	*Tatler*	Sir Richard Steele.
Boz	*Evening Chronicle*	Charles Dickens.
Cantianus	*Kentish Gazette*	Rev. E. Marshall.
Cato (Letters)	*London Journal*	J. Trenchard and
	British Journal	Thomas Gordon.
Curtius	*Public Ledger*	Dr. Wm. Jackson.
Conway, Derwent	*Derbyshire Courier*	H. D. Inglis.
D'Anvers, Caleb	*Craftsman*	Nicholas Amhurst.
Decimus	*Middlesex Journal*	Thos. Chatterton.
Drawcansir, Sir Alexander	*Covent Garden Journal*	Henry Fielding.
Fitz-Harding	*John Bull*	Dr. John Hook.
Freeholder of Surrey, a	*Public Advertiser*	John Horne Tooke.
Ghost of Vandegrab, the	*Morning Chronicle*	Sir J. Mackintosh.
Hafiz	*Morning Post*	Stott.
Hardcastle, Danfel	*Times*	Page.
Hedgehog, Humphrey	Various	John Gifford.
Hid-Allan	*Star*	A. Cunningham.
Hooker, Richard, of the Inner-Temple	*Weekly Miscellany*	Dr. Webster.
Inspector, the	*Daily Advertiser*	Sir John Hill.
Junia	*Public Advertiser*	Caleb Whitefoord.
Junius	*Ditto:* said to be	Sir P. Francis.
Lilburne	*Champion*	James Ralph.
Massachusettensis	*Massachusetts Gazette*	Samuel Leonard.
Novangulus	*Boston Gazette*	J. Adams.
Philolethes	*London Evening Post*	Nicholas Amhurst.
Porcupine, Peter	Various	William Cobbett.
Probus	*Political Register*	Thos. Chatterton.
Ranger, Esq., Charles	*Gray's Inn Journal*	Arthur Murphy.
Ratclyffe, Sir Isaac	*Hyp Doctor*	Orator Henley.
Runnymede	*Times*	B. Disraeli.
Sauntcrer, the	*Tyne Mercury*	Hewson Clarke.
Strada	*Champion*	Thomas Barnes.
Strike but Hear	*Public Advertiser*	John Horne Tooke.

Titmarsh, Michael Angelo	*Britannia*	W. M. Thackeray.
Town Critic and Censor-General, Mr.	*World*	Bonnell Thornton.
Town Critic, Junior	*Traveller*	Leigh Hunt.
Trotplaid, John	*Jacobite Journal*	Henry Fielding.
Valens	*London Evening Post*	Richard Burke.
Vetus	*Times*	Captain Sterling.
Vinegar, Captain Hercules	*Champion*	Henry Fielding.
Visionary, the	*Edinburgh Weekly Journal*	Sir Walter Scott.
Walsingham, Esq., Francis	*Free Briton*	Arnall.

THE AMBASSADORS OF "THE TIMES."

To Italy	in 1851	Michael Burke Honan.
„ the Crimea	1853	W. Howard Russell.
„ China	1857	T. Wingrove Cooke.
„ India	1857	W. Howard Russell.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the foregoing pages were in type, three names have occurred to us which have been heard in connexion with the Press world sufficiently often to have demanded a notice in our pages, but who were overlooked in their proper place. Josiah Conder, Robert Knox, and the young and rising journalist, James Hannay. Josiah Conder was the first editor of the *Patriot*, a dissenting organ, founded in 1833, which soon afterwards absorbed the *Christian Advocate*, and its editor, Mr. J. M. Hare, who became Conder's joint editor on the *Patriot*. The "Eclectic Review" was for many years the property and under the editorship of Conder, who also wrote some poems and many religious works. Robert Knox came from Ireland, where he was born in 1808, and entered the Irish newspaper world at an early age. He was for some time editor of the *Morning Herald*, and, on the recent breaking up of that establishment, under Mr. Baldwin's failure, received a consular appointment abroad. James Hannay is one of that band of brilliant journalists whom the *Daily News* gathered together. The son of David Hannay, a banker, he was born at Dumfries on the 17th of February, 1827. Five out of his thirty years were spent at sea. In March, 1840, he joined H.M. ship *Cambridge*, 78, and was engaged in the Egyptian war; but—strange transition!—on leaving the sea, in 1845, he became a reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*, and afterwards joined the staff of the *Daily News*. In the general

election of 1857 he unsuccessfully tried for a seat in Parliament to represent his native place. Mr. Hannay is also well known as the author of many clever and popular works; among them, "Singleton Fontenoy," and "Eustace Conyers," two novels, "Sand and Shells," &c., and has also contributed papers to the "Quarterly Review," and to most of the magazines of the day.

We will take this opportunity, too, of correcting an error into which we have fallen, in speaking of the railway press of 1845. We had thought only two papers came out of the terrible crash alive, but we have since found there was a third, the *Railway Record*, which still survives. Errors and omissions could scarcely be avoided where the facts were so scattered about and hidden; but we trust we have corrected most of the first which had before existed and supplied many of the second which had been concealed. Glancing the other day over the "Family Tutor," a work published in 1855, we find it states that "The *Public Ledger* is believed to have been the first daily newspaper." And this is a fair sample of the popular knowledge of the subject. If we have allowed some misapprehensions to go still uncorrected, we trust the scattered nature of the information which we have had to collect will be taken into account; and the peculiar difficulties of a subject, where a jealous reserve is necessarily maintained to support the anonymous character of the Press, which goes so far to ensure its independence, and even its influence, will be appreciated. That reserve we were bound to respect, or allow our memoirs of the Press to sink into mere personal and mischievous scandal.

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